



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Byron.

15451  
359

15451.359

**HARVARD COLLEGE  
LIBRARY**



**TRANSFERRED  
FROM THE  
GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**





2/1/26

A letter to the R.<sup>t</sup> Hon. Lord Byron --  
signed Fabius. 1821.

Two Letters to the R.<sup>t</sup> Hon. Lord Byron --  
by the Rev.<sup>d</sup> W.<sup>m</sup> L. Bowles. 3<sup>rd</sup> 18<sup>th</sup>. 1821.

A letter to the Rev.<sup>d</sup> W. L. Bowles --  
by M. McDermot. 1822

all from the Pamphlet.

+ referring to Byron's estimate of Pope



A

# LETTER

TO THE

**RIGHT HON. LORD BYRON,**

PROTESTING AGAINST THE IMMOLATION

OF

**GRAY, COWPER, & CAMPBELL,**

AT THE

**SHRINE OF POPE.**



*Hic, dum sublimes versus ructatur, et errat.*

*HOR.*



**LONDON:**



**1821.**



15451.359

✓

A

## LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HON. LORD BYRON.

MY LORD,

YOUR "Letter on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's Strictures" is not the least poetical of your works. The impassioned vindication of the poesy with which genius can surround all works in which the all-interesting mind of man can be employed, does no less honor to your feelings as a man, than to your taste as a poet. But disputants ever caricature the faults and burlesque the beauties of their antagonists, at the same time that they shade the defects and emblazon the merits of their friends. Your Lordship's chivalrous and enthusiastic zeal for Pope's character has led you to mistake principles and to misrepresent conduct. Your generosity engaged you to become the advocate of Pope, and your ardor in the cause of your client suggested what he required, not what truth and reason warranted. With the fervor of a poet too, you persuaded yourself that forcible statement and clear illustration were proofs of undoubted truth and unequivocal justice. Your defence of Pope's moral character I admit to be as just as it is manly. Your picture of English *cant* possesses a moral truth and grandeur that shrivels up at once every fool's face that looks upon it. You depart from truth, and nature, and poetry, when you represent Gray's Odes as encumbrances on the glory of his Elegy, and all your subsequent criticism is perverse and unjust. My reasons I shall assign with all the freedom, which, as a poet and as a critic, you invite.

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY  
DEPOSITED BY THE LIBRARY OF THE  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

APR 21 1940

Were I to depreciate the *Elegy*, I should be guilty of the offence which I censure. Your Lordship justly denounces the perverse pedantry of admiring poetry according to its classification, and yet in the same page you prefer the *Elegy* to the *Odes*. Why? only to prepare for a vigorous defence of the "*Elegy on an unfortunate Lady*," or the "*Essay on Man*." I venture to say in the name of all disinterested lovers of poetry, that the sublime, impassioned, high-finished poetry, of the "*Progress of Poesy*," is as far superior to the "*Elegy*," as the "*Pleasures of Hope*," is superior to "*Blair's Sermons*." Lord Byron, when he is not making a case for the "*Essay on Man*," would be the best of judges on the subject. I abstain from quoting from an ode so rapturous and so impressed on every poetical mind; but when you, my Lord, even in the character of an advocate for Pope, called the *Elegy* "the corner-stone of Gray's glory," did you recollect the ode on *Eton College*?

"The stings of falsehood those shall try,  
And hard unkindness' alter'd eye,  
That mocks the tear it forc'd to flow;  
And keen remorse, with blood defil'd,  
And moody madness, laughing wild  
Amid severest woe."

Surely the enamored enthusiast of ethical poetry cannot place lines like these below the "*Elegy*." But the bold and bullying paradox which insensibly led your Lordship to calumniate Virgil, Milton, Cowper, and Poetry, I must transcribe: "In my mind, the highest of all poetry is ethical poetry, as the highest of all earthly objects must be moral truth."—"In my mind, the ethical is the highest of all poetry, because it does that in *verse*, which the greatest of men have wished to accomplish in *prose*." W. L. Bowles must envy the talent which such flings indicate. If, in defence of his creed, he can ever have occasion to invoke ingenuity to supply the place of truth, and assertion to appear equivalent to reason, he may find a model of high authority. What is moral truth, my Lord? Suppose me not petulantly to ask the question, but really consider how various and prosaic the theories upon that subject are, and allow that with poetry they are but slightly connected. A version of the decalogue in metre is but ordinary poetry. You have confidently appealed to Jesus Christ and to Socrates as standards in prose; but surely your Lordship is aware that they have left no writings, poetical or prosaic. "He that drives fat oxen must himself be fat." Architecture must be the highest of all arts, as the highest of all artificial objects are church-spires. There have been histories of England in verse, but I believe they are superseded by Hume's prose. The finest execution by Pope of

the civil wars of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, would never equal the prose of Tacitus.

The sublimity, poetry, and imposing awfulness of moral excellence, every susceptible and honest mind will admit and feel; but where, in the writings of Pope, am I to find the living image of this excellence? Nestor is a good old man, Evander is exquisitely simple and affectionate, Albert gives the authority of age to the warmest feelings of the youthful bosom, and the soul is destitute of feeling that sympathizes not in the wild despair of Othaliassi. In the writings of Pope I look in vain for the genuine operation of feeling,—for the honest movements of the heart,—for the real voice of nature,—for the true language of passion. All these appear in Pope like the image of the snow-clad trees in the icy lake. I desire not to depreciate Pope; I read him, repeat him, and value him. The proverbs, aphorisms, and superficial remarks of life, were never more elegantly rendered in verse. It is only your Lordship, by carrying him to a height which he is quite unable to bear, that can occasion his sinking below his just and appropriate level. “Ethical poetry requires more mind, more wisdom, more power, than all the forests that ever were walked, and all the epics that ever were founded upon fields of battle.” Lucan founded his poetry on battles, and hence he offered his own mother as a ransom for his life; Epicharis, having more mind, more wisdom, more power, chose to strangle herself rather than betray persons unconnected with her and almost unknown to her. Will your Lordship say that she was capable of writing better ethical poetry? But your Lordship means the power, wisdom, and mind, for writing elegant rhymes on ethical rules. If so, I have only to say that your Lordship’s taste is singular. I have no doubt at all that the ethical persons who walk, or are carried, along the streets of London, derive more comfort, ease, and ethical accommodation, from coarse and vulgar paviors, than from the admired and celebrated architects of St. Paul’s Cathedral and Westminster Abbey; and hence your Lordship may assert, that the former have more mind, more wisdom, and more power; but, alas! the world will not believe you, my Lord. I *am* feelingly alive to the charms of verse in matters which it may be convenient to commit to memory.

“Here then we rest: ‘the universal cause  
Acts to one end, but acts by various laws.’  
In all the madness of superfluous health,  
The train of pride, the impudence of wealth,  
Let this great truth be present night and day,  
But most be present if we preach or pray.”

“From *o* are formed *am* and *em*,  
From *i*, *ram*, *rim*, *ro*, *ssc* and *sscm*.”

*U, us, and rus, are formed from um.*  
*All other parts from re do come;*  
*As bam, bo, rem, a, e, and i,*  
*Ns and dus, dum, do, and di."*

This is ethical poetry, the highest of all poetry, because it does that in verse which the greatest of men have wished to accomplish in prose.

You hurry yourself, my Lord, into a very seasonable but not a very classical fury, in order to pronounce the *Georgics* a finer poem than the *Eneid*. The same doctrine is most religiously inculcated in the "Lime-street sermons," but begging your Lordship's pardon, and also that of the Lime-street sermon-makers, the world will ever think the *Eneid* the finer poem.

"Indulge ordinibus: nec secius omnis in unguem  
 Arboribus positis secto via limite quadret."

May I translate the first two words in these your favorite lines? "Pray permit the privileged orders to have their own way." But even your Lordship's privileged judgment will not take Milton's comparative estimate of his *Paradise Regained*, or Cowper's comparative estimate of his translation of Homer; why then should you cite the idle tale of Virgil's preference of the *Georgics* as authentic and decisive? Let me honestly confess my suspicions that your Lordship never read any part of the *Georgics*, save the episodes, more than once, and that you dart at the refreshing poetry of the episodes as eagerly as the traveller in the sandy deserts of Arabia at the green islands of palm trees and bounding waters. The episodes in the *Georgics* are too splendid for any feeble epithets of praise; but will your Lordship stake your credit as a critic that the tale of Eurydice is finer in its execution, or more affecting in its sentiments, than the glowing story of Nisus and Euryalus? It is not necessary for my purpose even to glance at the grossness of several passages in the *Georgics*. The desperate effort to place the *Georgics* above the *Eneid*—*imponere Pelio Ossam*—is a plain avowal of the relative rank of Pope. Most strange, however, is the flight of your Lordship from the *Georgics* to the line of your ethical versifier,

"The proper study of mankind is man."

Is man a clod, an ox, or an asp? But thus even the genius of Lord Byron flounders in shallow water.

In the next paragraph we are assured that "imagination" and "invention," are the two commonest of qualities. My Lord, this looks like bitter irony of Pope. Had your "illustrious and unrivalled poet" no imagination or invention? The Irish peasant feels

mighty inspiration from whiskey, but is the Scotch peasant a stranger to its inventive influence? "The rank of Burns is the very first of his art." Yet he would "taste the barley-bree." Here, whiskey must suffer for the sake of Pope's ethics; elsewhere ethical and candid negus must be anathematized to save Pope's poetry. He is but "a *soi-disant* poet of this day," who is fed with bread and butter during the operation of dictating verses. It is but an Irish peasant that drinks whiskey. Ethical poetry, the highest of all poetry, is inspired by something half-way between butter and whiskey. Lucretius has indeed given us a very superior poem; his "imagination," his "invention," his allusions, digressions, and illustrations, are passionate, poetical, and powerful; as far superior to Pope's "ethics," as the storm that convulses the forest to the blasts of a pair of bellows. The moral of Lucretius is at least as true and as practical and as ethical as Pope's. How can you, my Lord, charge Lucretius with having ruined his poetry by his ethics? His system of cosmogony may be as unphilosophical as Pope's optimism is puerile, but surely he enforces all the great duties of morality with as much orthodoxy as Pope.

Here I must break in upon the natural order of the subject, in order to offer a remark or two upon some suspicious propositions of your Lordship. Milton is charged with absurdity and blasphemy for his use of cannons, lightnings, and thunders. I am afraid this too is for the sake of Pope. The truth is, that Milton is ravishingly poetical, on earth or in hell, but in heaven he drops his wings and sleeps. When he is conversant with human or hellish affairs, he feels and communicates all the inspiration of genius, nature, and life; when he is impelled by faith into "ethical poetry or didactic poetry," he becomes dull and uninteresting, and we willingly find fault with every thing he does or sings. Homer, Virgil, and Milton, can easily carry our fancies and our sympathies to the realms below; we know that there are deep caverns in the earth and unfathomable depths in the sea: but upwards we cannot go beyond the summit of Olympus; we can only fix our eyes on vacancy till they are closed in dark clouds of slumber. This it is, my Lord, that renders all Milton's cannons, and warfare, and bustle, above the Empyrean devoid of poetical spirit.

Your criticism on the bust of Antinous is curiously perverse. "Can there be more poetry gathered into existence than in that wonderful creation of perfect beauty? But the poetry of this bust is in no respect derived from nature, nor from any association of moral exaltedness." But from what is the poetry derived? The same execution, super-natural, super-artificial, might have been applied to the figure of an ass or a monkey. Pray, does your Lordship think that any execution could gather into such a figure

all the poetry in existence? No, you cannot be so absurd and blasphemous even for the sake of Pope. Without the magic of the mind no poetry ever existed. The mind, its feelings, its passions, its associations, is the whole of poetry. Descriptions of nature are poetical in proportion as they suggest, by memory or association, warm feelings to the mind; artificial objects, by becoming interwoven with the memory of the minds that lived in ancient times of renown, or by exciting sensations of alarm or sympathy for minds imagined to be exposed to distress and danger, often possess greater poetical interest than the grandest objects in nature. The bust of Antinous is poetical, because its perfect beauty and symmetry impress upon the spectator the perfect loveliness of a mind corresponding to the external form. The bust is therefore more sublime than a mountain, but no power of a poet, or magician, can "imbue a pack of cards with more poetry than inhabits the forests of America." As if conscious that nothing could serve your Lordship's purpose but thorough swaggering, you lustily swear, that "a silken purse can be made of a sow's ear." Then, by way of atonement to the dignity of proverbs, you add that "a good workman will not find fault with his tools." There is some difference, however, between a workman's *materials* and his *tools*. Pope's poetical tools cannot be found fault with; his materials alone are in fault, and therefore the proverb on that point must have the lie from your Lordship, while the proverb on the other is happily sanctioned.

It is only in deep, serious, and natural agitations of the mind, that we can possibly sympathize. It was "the little scudding vessels contending with the giant element," which struck your Lordship as poetical. Yet the calm sea and the tranquil Turkish craft, are the *ethical* characteristics of the scene. Could not almighty execution imbue the paper-boats of boys with more poetry than inhabited the Turkish craft running, it might be, for eternity? No; my Lord, this extravagance can do no service to Pope. It is the intoxicating witchery of the tender feelings,—it is the fearful agitation of overwhelming danger,—it is the irresistible swell of natural passion,—it is the vivid representation of objects naturally and powerfully interesting,—that really carries the mind beyond the prosaic calm of ethics and indifference, and gives poetical delight. A slop-bason and another vase are used by the greatest of men, but they are far more ethical and less poetical than a wine-cup; for the wine-cup is intimately associated with human passions. Hence tragedy is really and indisputably the very highest order of poetry, but it is not the tragedy of Hughes, or Fenton, or Addison. It is utterly unworthy of your Lordship, to confound success in Drury-lane with the highest poetical merit.

Your Lordship's magnanimity and bounty in claiming the highest ranks in poetry to Petrarch, the sonneteer, and Burns, the tale-teller, are worthy of unbounded praise. In this deed of chivalry you are unquestionably as just as you are generous. Had Dryden written but the one ode, he would have ranked as the first of poets; because that ode has all the impassioned interest of tragedy. Had Cowper written but the verses on his mother's picture, every human heart (not destitute of sensibility, or furiously chivalrous for Pope) would own him, love him, and live with him, as the softest, sweetest, wildest votary of pathetic poetry. But, for Cowper your Lordship has no charity. You challenge "any one to deny, that three lines addressed by Cowper to his nurse, are eminently poetical and pathetic;" yet, you say, "Cowper is no poet." Jesus Christ may have his place by Socrates, to support Pope; for suicidal Cowper, no helper is found.

Barbarous, beyond the licence of a poet's criticism, is your Lordship's thrust at the most delicate, sensitive, pure, and holy being, that ever delighted the world with enthusiastic song. It is mortifying to the admirers of genius, that Lord Byron (in the veriest wantonness of zeal for Pope) could make a sneering allusion to the deranged sensibility which prompted Cowper to attempt suicide. I will not be so ungenerous as to retort upon a peer of England, himself a poet, who never knew the severest struggles of merit, accusing Cowper of courting a sinecure. Such a cold-blooded insult to merit in humble station, would have better become a pensioned representative of a Scotch county; or a Secretary of State for Ireland. Let not the purity of Cowper be sullied by a defence of his connexion with Mrs. Unwin; it was no judicious kindness for Pope, that suggested to your Lordship a justification so utterly inapplicable. The charities of Cowper were as liberal and delicate as poetical sensibility, and the tenderest humanity, could render them. In religion, there is no room for comparison. Let Pope be as tolerant and pious as your Lordship may choose, Cowper was sublimely, awfully religious. He who (from prejudice, intolerance, or dogmatism) can see no grandeur and poetry in the religious madness of Cowper, is to be pitied—even if he were Lord Byron. Is not the faithful representation of the finest of human minds agitated by gloomiest horrors, or wildest joys, more poetical than all the associations of a pack of cards?

"Look where he comes;—in this embowered alcove,  
Stand close concealed, and see a statue move:  
Lips busy, and eyes fixt, foot falling slow,  
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasped below,  
Interpret to the marking eye distress,  
Such as its symptoms ~~can~~ alone express.  
That tongue is silent now; that silent tongue  
Could argue woe, could jest or join the song.

Man is a harp, whose chords elude the sight,  
 Each yielding harmony, disposed aright;  
 The screws reversed (a task, which if he please,  
 God in a moment executes with ease)  
 Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,  
 Lo! till he tune them all their power and use."

It is no common characteristic of a general, that every individual in his army should think of him in the hour of battle. Even Cæsar announced his name ere the mariners felt the inspiration of his presence. Who can read the bewitching "Task," or any of the minor works of the graphic poet, without *feeling* the presence and the power of Wm. Cowper? Your Lordship's poetry derives much of its effect from your address in identifying yourself with your writings. Be content, notwithstanding, to be far inferior to Cowper, for he is indeed inimitable.

Your Lordship ought to have disdained to imitate the gabbling criticism of Miss Seward on Cowper's translation of Homer. If it were incomparably inferior to Pope's, it could afford but an equivocal criterion of their comparative merits as original poets. But, in fact, they are not to be compared. Cowper's translation can please only the reader and admirer of Homer. Pope's version may well delight the mere English scholar. That children should read it with rapture, is natural; and it is not unnatural, that the prejudices of childhood should bias the matured judgment. But none who are familiarly acquainted with Homer's Greek can ever read Pope's version for the first time. Your Lordship might, perhaps, by diligent inquiry, find, that many human beings (thoroughly acquainted with Homer) have read and admired Cowper's faithful and harmonious translation.

Your Lordship's disposition to sacrifice your own poetical existence to the fame of Pope, is somewhat alarming. In your case, I protest against the licence:

—"sit jus, liceatque perire poetis."

This is worthy of the parental part which you have undertaken to perform for Pope. Your allusion to Babel has called my attention to the Bible, where I find a poet of illustrious rank, and chivalrous feelings, lamenting that he had not perished, rather than an artificial, unnatural, profligate person, whom he had been anxiously desirous of protecting:—

"My Absalom! (the voice of nature cried,)  
 Oh! that for thee thy father could have died!  
 For bloody was the deed, and rashly done,  
 That slew my Absalom! my son, my son!"

"Musing on days when yet the guiltless boy  
 Smil'd on his sire, and fill'd his heart with joy."

Lord Byron, when a boy, read Pope's Homer with rapture.



But, for God's sake ! my Lord, forbear "to attempt the most atrocious of crimes in the Christian code." Live for ever, O bard ! and live Pope too !

But it is not generous in your Lordship, nor yet just, to the sacrifice all your contemporaries to the angry *manes* of Pope. There is, at least, one living poet, who is as far superior to Pope, both in the "thoughts that breathe and words that burn," as Pope is superior to Tickell. I accuse not your Lordship of envy ; your pride of genius must spurn the approach of a passion so humiliating. Tell us then what part of Pope's writings would supply the divinity that breathes and speaks in every line of "O Connor's child ?" Will posterity, indeed, prefer the "Eloisa" to "Gertrude"—the "Rape of the Lock" to the "Exile of Erin"—and the "Essay on Man" to the "Pleasures of Hope ?" Pope was a poet, and he possessed one eminent and rare claim to the title : he knew how to touch, retouch, polish, alter, and improve every line, till it was highly finished. It is not the selection of the individual, Antinous, but the perfect execution that has "gathered into existence the poetry of the bust." In the present age, your Lordship knows, that there is only one poet who finishes ;—and his finishing, like his genius, is far superior to Pope's. The very nicest execution will never convert a "shilling" into a "paradise," or a pack of cards into a living army. But, where the subject is great and interesting, exquisite polish will more than double its grandeur and its interest. It is only the refined delicacy of genius than can give the mighty eloquence of complete execution. Pope finished with great skill, and with unquestionable genius, but all his subjects are unpoetical. The great living poet to whom I allude, has chosen his subjects with as much felicity as he has exquisitely finished every line he has written.

Mighty, indeed, would be the benefit conferred on society, by sweeping from the fields of poetry the rank mushrooms, which have been produced with far greater rapidity, and far less labor, than decrees in chancery. Even your Lordship might have greatly improved your own merit and fame, as well as increased the gratification of your sincerest admirers, by being a little more laborious.

Your Lordship's saintly lamentations over a declining age, and your more than puritanical censure of a *lie*, are promising symptoms of your Lordship's "growth in grace." I apprehend that "poet," "maker," "creator," essentially and necessarily mean, "liar," "feigner," "tale-teller." Suppose poets were sworn to the truth of all the incidents they celebrate, would the poetry of the age be greatly improved ? In such a methodistical age, I fear the pillory would become the passport to poetical fame. It is a

fearful admission against Pope, that his defence requires the confounding of the *probability* with the *reality* of an action. The most poetical of Pope's works is, "the Rape of the Lock," and all that is poetical in it, is— a "lie," my Lord. Would John Milton make affidavit, that—

"Before their eyes, in sudden view appear,  
The secrets of the hoary deep, a dark  
Illimitable ocean, without bound?"

Would he swear that—

"Into this wild abyss the wary fiend  
Stood on the brink of hell, and look'd awhile,  
Pond'ring his voyage?"

After lamenting the lying declension and tale-telling signs of the times, you naturally and fervently conjure us to "make our calling and election sure." Truth, sense, reason, are flustered, and then comes upon us the raving importunity to fly for our lives, and to grasp Pope as the only anchor of salvation, amid the convulsion that overwhelms our country and our language. Let the Reverend W. L. Bowles tremble for his professional fame. Really, my Lord, it is too much for your Lordship to say, with reverend gravity of face, that Pope is a higher poet than Shakspeare and Milton. Tell us that robin-red-breast is a much more melodious warbler than the nightingale, but tell us not that Pope is a higher "poet" than "sweetest Shakspeare, fancy's child." It were deplorable if the mysterious gentleman in asterisks, to whom your letter is addressed, should have contrived to get your Lordship's authority to assertions wild and monstrous as these, as a puff for his forth-coming edition of Pope.

Your charge of plagiarism against Mr. Campbell is invidious, and unworthy of your Lordship.

"As yon summits, soft and fair,  
Clad in colors of the air,  
Which to those who journey near  
Barren, brown, and rough appear,  
Still we tread the same coarse way—  
The present's still a cloudy day."

"Is not this," you ask, "the original of the far-famed—"

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,  
And robes the mountain in its azure hue?"

The question, my Lord, might well admit of a negative answer; but if the six lines had been the original of the majestic two, it was the glance of the poet's eye that gave the enchantment to the far-famed lines.

Lucretius writes :

"At jam non domus accipiet te læta : neque uxor  
Optima, nec dulces occurrent oscula nati  
Præripere; et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent."

Is not this the original of the touching lines :

"For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;  
No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share?"

Your Lordship has styled the Elegy "the corner-stone of Gray's glory," and the above lines are indisputably the finest ethical image in the poem, yet far be it from me to think less of the merit of the elegy, because I find this accidental coincidence or unconscious translation. Surely a poet will never depreciate Virgil for the living beauty he bestowed on incidents which he had found in Homer.

In Pliny's Panegyric, I find a most eloquent account of the expulsion of spies from human society. They were committed, not to steeds bound for the desert, but to ships left to the caprice of the winds of heaven and the waves of the sea; they flung back their curses, and the multitude on the shore were loud in their joy. Who would not deride with contemptuous indignation the attempt to depreciate your Lordship's characteristic lines as borrowed from Pliny?

"The last of human sounds which rose,  
As I was darted from my foes,  
Was the wild shout of savage laughter,  
Which on the wind came roaring after,  
A moment from that rabble rout:  
With sudden wrath I wrench'd my head,  
And snapp'd the cord, which to the masts  
Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,  
And writhing half my form about,  
Howl'd back my curse."

Virgil writes;—

"Spem vultu simulat, premit altum corde dolorem."

Is this the original of—

"To force of cheer a greater show  
And seem above both wounds and woe?"

Dr. Johnson's "London" contains the couplet—

"And fix'd on Cambria's solitary shore,  
Give to St. David one true Briton more."

Is this the original of—

"One freeman more, America, to thee?"

Deranged and unpoetical Cowper addresses Liberty:—

"Incomparable gem! thy worth untold;  
Cheap, though blood-bought; and thrown away when sold."

Does your Lordship descend to an imitation of Cowper, the translator of Homer, when you write,—

"whose red right-hands have bought  
Rights, cheaply earn'd with blood?"

But I shall not remark further upon a species of criticism more becoming the character of Zoilus than your Lordship's. You are eloquent and convincing when you vindicate the poetry of mighty productions of genius and art, whether presented to our view or recalled by association to our memory; you do great discredit to your own temper and taste, when you affect to find no poetry in Cowper, and endeavour to question the originality of Campbell. Pope requires not the sacrifice which your Lordship would offer. Horace's satires and epistles would have derived no benefit from the destruction of Virgil's poetry. In "the dead language" of those unrivalled poets, the wit, and wisdom, and *ethics* of Horace are studied with intense delight, but far higher is the delight with which we read the pathetic dreams of Dido, the fervent but unavailing prayers of Evander, and the frantic exclamations of the agonized mother of Euryalus. Posterity will admire the elegance, the spirit, and the wit of Pope, but they will weep with "Conrad," and delight in the holiest sympathy with "O'Connor's pale and lovely child." When the Epistles of Horace shall cease to excite attention, and give delight by felicity of expression and familiarity of description, on human character and conduct, then, but not till then, will the writings of Cowper become uninteresting. In Cowper's personal character we feel much of the interest that is excited by the most poetical of persons:

"I am a very foolish fond old man,  
Fourscore and upward; and, to deal plainly,  
I fear, I am not in my perfect mind."

Poor Ophelia—

"Divided from herself and her fair judgment,"

does not on that account affect us less by her poetry. Who delights not to "wheel the sofa round," and converse with the bard of Olney? Who can see him feeding his hares in the evening, or hear him—

"Sighing say,

"I knew at least one hare that had a friend,"

without feeling emotions of no ordinary nature?

Collins was a poet, and yet the most poetical words he ever uttered are: "I have but one book, but that is the best." The heart of an intelligent and honest reader is a more correct critic than the proudest idol of popular applause, and the heart of such a reader will repose with delight on the pages of Cowper, in defiance of all the laws and decisions of the favored poets of the present day. Zoilus might have said, that Homer lived at a happy time for his fame; and, leaving no monument of his mind but his criticism, might be too much despised to be execrated. I believe your Lordship pronounced Cowper no poet, not in the insolence of rank or

time, but because you regarded only the rank and fame of Pope : believing so, I am confident you will be ready to do justice to Cowper, when your professional duty can leave you at liberty to act worthily of your poetical renown.

I am, My LORD,

Your Lordship's very humble servant,

FABIUS.

---

END OF NO. XXXVI.

---

(2)

# TWO LETTERS

TO THE

RIGHT HONORABLE

LORD BYRON,

IN ANSWER TO HIS

LORDSHIP'S LETTER TO \*\*\*\* \*ON THE REV. W. L. BOWLES'S  
STRICTURES ON THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF POPE:

MORE PARTICULARLY ON THE QUESTION,

*Whether POETRY be MORE IMMEDIATELY indebted to  
what is SUBLIME or BEAUTIFUL in the Works of  
NATURE, or the Works of ART?*

---

BY THE REV. WM. L. BOWLES.

---

"He that plays "at Bowls," must expect RUBBERS."

OLD PROVERB.

"NATURE must give way to ART!" (See Pope's Works.)

SONG, BY A PERSON OF QUALITY!

---

*Third Edition with Alterations, exclusively for the Pamphleteer.*

LONDON:—1821.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

---

I trust Lord BYRON will excuse me for having made somewhat free with the singular Motto to his book. It is, "I will play at BOWLS with the *Sun* and the *Moon*."—Old Song.

A "certain Family" had been spoken of, in the *Quarterly Review*, as "ringing changes on Nature for two thousand years."

By a somewhat ludicrous coincidence, it happens that the "arms" of this "family" are, literally, a "Sun and Moon," a *Sun*, OR, and a *Moon*, ARGENT, secundum artem.

It is, therefore, with this *Sun and Moon*, that Lord BYRON, I have no doubt, plays at "BOWLS!" not with the *Sun* and *Moon* in *Nature*.

In return, I have only ventured to take, as an inscription to my shield, his Lordship's motto, with a trifling alteration:

He that plays at "BOWLS" (with the <sup>3</sup> *SUN* and *MÖON*),  
must expect "RUBBERS;"

Which is only an old "proverb," for part of an *old song*! As for any alteration in his heraldic motto, I should not dare to say, *Ne crede* BYRON; but, I think, in this game, I shall take from his Lordship's arms the "*supporters*;" though I would not, if I could, touch the *graceful and glittering crest of his high poetical character*; and long may he wear it uninjured!

#### ADVERTISEMENT.

When I have classed POPE, as a Poet, inferior to MILTON and SHAKSPEARE, I must beg to be understood, that I do not consider him in the same *file* with these Poets, nor in any degree to be ranked with them.

It would be important for the reader to keep in mind one plain distinction, in reading what is here offered. Whatever is *picturesque*, is so far *poetical*; but all that is “poetical” does not require to be “picturesque.” Lord BYRON would never have said, “What painter does not break the sea with a boat,” &c. if he had remembered this distinction.

In speaking as I have done of Lord BYRON, lest the language I have used might be attributed to the wish of deprecating his resentment, I must beg to add, that I have always said the same with regard to the high character of his poetry; but I would wish it to be distinctly understood, that, as I do not *fear* him, so I scorn to *flatter* him.

London, May 25, 1821.



## LETTER I.

---

MY LORD,

**HORNE TOOKE**, if I remember right, began his well-known letter to **JUNIUS** in these words: "Tragedy, Comedy, and Farce,—**JUNIUS**, **WILKES**, and **FOOTE**,—against one poor parson, are fearful odds." So I might say, Lord **BYRON**, and my two late assailants,—**APOLLO**, **MIDAS**, and **PUNCH**,—are indeed fearful odds against a country clerk and provincial editor.

But to be more courtly, in approaching your Lordship as a controversialist upon any point, I am well aware of the great talents opposed to me. I have just read your remarks (addressed to a friend) on my *Life of POPE*, on the *first part* of my *Vindication in the Pamphleteer*, and on my *PRINCIPLES of Poetical Criticism*, which I had called (*foolishly*, in your Lordship's opinion) *INVARIABLE*.

I thank you, cordially, for this opportunity of explaining my sentiments, which I know you would not intentionally pervert; for the flattering terms in which you have spoken of me personally; and, most of all, for the honorable and open manner in which you have met the questions on which we are at issue.

The late contest in which I have been involved, with those of a character so opposite, has tended to make this contrast of urbanity and honorable opposition more gratifying. From you, my Lord, I was certain I should not meet coarse and insulting abuse, the foul ribaldry of opprobrious contumely, nor the petty chicanery that purposely keeps out of sight one part of an argument, and wilfully misrepresents another.

Your opposition, as might become a person of so high a station, and of such distinguished genius, exhibits none of

those little arts of literary warfare. Your letter is at once argumentative, manly, good-humored, and eloquent.

I am afraid, that if those whom I have lately encountered might have thought that "your Lordship would decide the contest at once,"—in short, "hit the nail in the head, and Bowles in the head also,"—they will be somewhat disappointed.

But, be this as it may, I can say, with great truth, that if it be an honor to have such a character for an opponent, it is a duty incumbent on me to endeavour to show myself not unworthy, my Lord, of such notice, by meeting your objections in the same spirit.

Your observations, in answer to what I said of parts of Pope's moral character, may be comprised in few words. It was far from my heart to charge him with a "libertine sort of love," on account of the errors or frailties of youth. I disdained, in the *Life of Pope*, to make any allusion to Cibber's well-known anecdote. It would have been fanatic or hypocritical in me to have done so. When I spoke of his "libertine kind of love," I alluded to the general tone of his language to Lady Mary, and many of the ladies with whom he corresponded from youth to age. I suppressed with indignation, the *Imitation of Horace*, which I believe he wrote—the most obscene and daring piece of profligacy that ever issued from the press, since the days of Charles the Second. I deduced no trait of his character from it, though it was not written when youth and gaiety might, in some measure, have palliated the offence, but when he was forty-two years of age. But though I had no tincture, I hope, in my feeling, of hypocrisy, or fanaticism, I thought it a duty to society to touch on one prominent feature in his character, which shows itself in his correspondence.

As to the omission of the fact of his benevolence to SAVAGE, it was inadvertence,—*culpable*, I confess: but if I have spoken of his "general benevolence," I may be pardoned, I hope, for an omission, which, at all events, was not intentional; but on which your Lordship's animadversion I own to be just.

"Should some more sober critic come abroad,  
If wrong, I smile; if right, I kiss the rod."

Having touched on these points, I advance to meet your Lordship on the ground of those principles of poetical criticism, by which I adventured to estimate Pope's rank and station in his art.

If I cannot prove those principles invulnerable, even when

your Lordship assails them; if I cannot answer all your arguments as plainly and as distinctly as you have adduced them; the appellation "invariable" I shall instantly discard; but saying,—if I fall, it is *Æneæ dextrâ*.

On the contrary, if meeting any arguments *fairly*, I turn them against you; if, without avoiding the full force of any, I rebut them satisfactorily; I shall have more reason than ever to think those principles INVARIABLE, which even Lord Byron cannot overturn.

It is singular that in the latter part of my vindication from the charges of the Quarterly Review, I had quoted your own poetry, my Lord, to prove those very principles which your Lordship's criticism is employed to destroy.

One thing will give me satisfaction. If you, having descended into this contest, comprehend me, I shall not probably be misrepresented by others. But, as much misrepresentation on the subject has taken place, and some misconceptions, from which I think I shall show that your Lordship is not exempt; I shall first place before your Lordship, and the public, my sentiments, as they stand recorded in the tenth volume of POPE'S Works. They are these: I have often quoted them in part, but I find it, in consequence of so many misconceptions, necessary to transcribe the greater part, that my principles may be seen in connection, and under one view.

"I presume it will readily be granted, that 'all images 'drawn from what is *beautiful or sublime* in the works of NATURE, are MORE beautiful and sublime than any images 'drawn from ART;' and that they are therefore, *per se*, more poetical.

"In like manner, those PASSIONS of the human heart, which belong to Nature in general, are, *per se*, more adapted to the HIGHER SPECIES of Poetry, than those which are derived from *incidental and transient* MANNERS. A description of a Forest is more *poetical* than a description of a cultivated Garden; and the *Passions* which are pourtrayed in the Epistle of an Eloisa, render such a poem more *poetical*, (whatever might be the difference of merit in point of execution,) *intrinsically* more *poetical*, than a poem founded on the characters, incidents, and modes of *artificial life*; for instance, the Rape of the Lock.

"If this be admitted, the rule by which we would estimate POPE'S general poetical character would be obvious.

"Let me not, however, be considered as thinking that the *subject alone* constitutes poetical excellency. The *execution* is to be taken into consideration at the same time; for, with

Lord Harvey, we might fall asleep over the "*Creation*" of Blackmore, but be alive to the touches of animation and satire in BOILEAU.

The *subject*, and the *execution*, therefore, are equally to be considered;—the one respecting the *Poetry*,—the other, the *art* and *powers* of the *poet*. The *poetical subject*, and the *art* and *talents* of the poet, should always be kept in mind; and I imagine it is for want of observing this rule, that so much has been said, and so little understood, of the real ground of Pope's character as a poet.

"If you say he is not one of the first poets that England, and the polished literature of a polished æra can boast,

'Recte necne crocos floresque perambulat Attri  
Fabula si dubitem, clamant perisse pudorem  
Cuncti pene patres.'

"If you say that he stands *poetically* pre-eminent, in the highest sense, you must deny the principles of criticism, which I imagine will be acknowledged by all.

"In speaking of the *poetical subject*, and the *powers of execution*: with regard to the *first*, Pope cannot be classed among the highest orders of poets; with regard to the *second*, none ever was his *superior*. It is futile to expect to judge of *one* composition by the rules of *another*. To say that Pope, in this sense, is not a Poet, is to say that a *didactic Poem* is not a *Tragedy*, and that a *Satire* is not an *Ode*. Pope must be judged according to the rank in which he stands, among those whose delineations are taken more from *manners* than from *NATURE*. When I say that this is his *predominant* character, I must be insensible to every thing exquisite in poetry, if I did not except, *instantly*, the Epistle of Eloisa: but this can only be considered according to its class; and if I say that it seems to me superior to any other of the kind, to which it might fairly be compared, such as the Epistles of Ovid, Propertius, Tibullus, (I will not mention Drayton, and Pope's numerous subsequent Imitations;) but when this transcendent poem is compared with those which will bear the *comparison*, I shall not be deemed as giving reluctant praise, when I declare my conviction of its being infinitely superior to every thing of the kind, ancient or modern.

"In this poem, therefore, Pope appears on the high ground of the Poet of Nature; but this certainly is not his *general* character. In the particular instance of this poem, how distinguished and superior does he stand! It is sufficient that nothing of the kind has ever been produced equal to it, for *pathos*, *painting*, and *melody*."

Before I proceed, it will save myself and your Lordship

some trouble, if I request you to remember, in casting your eye on this portion of the estimate of Pope's poetical character, four material points.

1st. I speak not of NATURE GENERALLY, but of images SUBLIME or BEAUTIFUL in Nature; and if your Lordship had only kept this circumstance in recollection, you would have seen, that your pleasant pictures of "the Hog in the high wind," the footman's livery, the Paddington Canal, and the pigsties, the horse-pond, the slop-basin, or ANY OTHER vessel, all must *go for nothing*; for *natural* as these images might be, they are neither "*sublime* or beautiful;" and notwithstanding the pleasantry and wit with which they are associated in your Lordship's imagination,

"It grieves me much, the clerk might say again,  
Who WRITES SO WELL, should ever WRITE IN VAIN."

2d. You will observe, that the proposition, "Images from what is sublime or beautiful in Nature, *per se*," *abstractedly*, are connected with what follows, viz. the "PASSIONS which belong to Nature" in general, NOT to Man, as living at one period, but to the human heart in general, to Nature of all ages.

3dly. You will observe, that, in speaking of the subject and execution of a poem, I do not pass over the *execution*; for otherwise, Blackmore would be a greater poet than Pope:—and if your Lordship had remembered this point, you would not have supposed I could ever consider Fenton, or any other tragedian of the kind, as great a poet as Pope, though Fenton wrote a successful tragedy, and Pope, satires, &c.

And, 4thly. You will observe, that, in *execution* I think no poet was ever superior to Pope; though your Lordship thinks the *execution all*, and I do not, for reasons which will be given.

I now beg to place before you what follows, requesting you to observe that I most freely admit Pope's unquestioned rank in the pathetic part of poetry, concerning which my concluding remark was,—"*In the particular instance of this poem, how distinguished and SUPERIOR does he stand. It is sufficient that nothing of the kind ever has been produced, EQUAL TO IT for PATHOS, PAINTING, and MELODY!*"

To the first part I called Mr. Campbell's particular attention before; but I am certain many mistakes would be prevented, if any opposer of another's opinion would only take the trouble to do him the justice of impartially examining what those opinions are. I therefore think it necessary, before

I meet Lord Byron, to show where his most effective strokes seem to hit the hardest, and where they are wasted, not on my theory, but on the *winds*. I must hope, therefore, the reader will a little farther follow me.

After the word "melody" my observations on Pope's poetical character proceed as follow :

"From this exquisite performance, which seems to stand as the boundary between the poetry derived from the great and primary feelings of Nature, and that derived from Art, to satire, whose subject wholly concerns existing manners, the transition is easy, but the idea painful. Nevertheless, as Pope has chosen to write satires and epistles, they must be compared, not as Warton has, I think, injudiciously done with pieces of genuine poetry, but only with things of the same kind. To say that the beginning of one of Pope's satires is not poetical ; to say that you cannot find in it, if the words are transposed, the "*disjecti membra poetae*," is not criticism. The province of satire is totally wide ; its career is in *artificial life* ; and therefore to say that satire is not poetry, is to say an epigram is not an elegy. Pope has written satires ; that is, confined himself chiefly, as a poet, to those subjects with which, as it has been seen, he was most conversant ; subjects taken from living man, from *habits and manners*, more than from *principles and passions*.

"The career, therefore, which he opened to himself was in the second order in poetry ; but it was a line pursued by Horace, Juvenal, Dryden, Boileau ; and if in that line he stand the highest, upon these grounds we might fairly say, with Johnson, 'it is superfluous to ask whether Pope were a poet.'

"From the poetry, which, while it deals in local manners, exhibits also, as far as the subject would admit, the most exquisite embellishments of fancy, such as the machinery<sup>1</sup> of the Rape of the Lock, we may proceed to those subjects which concern 'living man.'

"The abstract philosophical view is first presented, as in the Essay on Man. The ground of such a poem is philosophy, not poetry : the poetry is only the coloring, if I may say so ; and to the coloring the eye is chiefly attentive. We hardly think of the philosophy, whether it be good or bad ; whether it be profound or specious ; whether it evince deep thinking, or exhibit only in new and pompous array the 'babble of the Nurse.' Scarcely any one, till a controversy

<sup>1</sup> In a note to this poem, the reason is given why Pope's airy spirits are inferior to Shakespeare's.

was raised, thought of the doctrines; but a thousand must have been warmed by the pictures, the addresses, the sublime interspersions of description, and the nice and harmonious precision of every word, and of almost every line. Whether, as a system of philosophy, it inculcated fate or not, no one paused to inquire; but every eye read a thousand times, and every lip, perhaps, repeated,

"Lo the poor Indian!" &c.

"The Lamb thy riot," &c.

"O Happiness," &c.

and many other passages.

"All these *illustrative* and *secondary* images are painted from the source of genuine poetry; from NATURE, not from ART. They therefore, independent of powers displayed in the versification, raise the Essay on Man, considered in the abstract, into *genuine poetry*, although the *poetical* part is subservient to the *philosophical*."

"The Moral Essays depart much farther from poetry so defined, as they exhibit particular casts and characters of man, according to different *habits* of existing society; that is, of *artificial* life."

"There is no reason to suppose that Pope, of the general internal feelings of Nature, could be more ignorant, or less capable of portraying them by vividness of expression and colors, than others; but we must estimate what he *has done*, not what he *might have done*. Many, perhaps, may regret with me, that if he disdained,

'..... in *Fancy's* fields to wander long,

But stoop'd to Truth, and moraliz'd his song;

that he had not at least wandered *somewhat longer* among scenes that were congenial to the feelings of every heart; and that he should leave them for the thorns and briars of ineffectual satire and bitterness; quitting for these such scenes as

'The Paraclete's white walls and silver springs;'

like his great predecessor in poetry, Milton, who left the 'Pastures of Peneus, and the Pines of Ætna,' to write 'Te-trachordon,' and to mingle in the malignant puritanical turbulence of the times.'

"When we speak of the poetical character, derived from passions of *general Nature*, two obvious distinctions must occur, without regard to Aristotle;—those which, derived from the passions, may be called *pathetic*, and those which, derived from the same source, may be called *sublime*."

"Of the pathetic, no one (considering the Epistle of Eloisa alone) has touched the chords so tenderly, so pathetically, and

so melodiously. As far as this goes, Pope, therefore, in poetical and musical expression, has *no competitor*.

"We will now proceed to consider those passions which are equally the subject of genuine poetry, and on which are founded (I do not say Epic or Tragic excellence, for these Pope declined, but) that species of poetic sublimity, which gives life and animation to the Ode.

"In this respect, I believe, no one who ever thought of Alexander's Feast, or the Bard of Gray, could for a moment imagine Pope *pre-eminent*. Before these he sinks, as much as any other writer, whose subject was pathetic, sinks before him. His Odes for the Duke of Buckingham, though elegant, are wholly unworthy to be classed as the compositions of a superior Lyric Poet.

"In what has been said, I have avoided the introduction of picturesque description; that is, accurate representations from *external objects* of Nature: but if the premises laid down in the commencement of these reflections be true, no one can stand pre-eminent as a great descriptive poet,<sup>1</sup> unless he have *an eye attentive to, and familiar with, every external appearance that she may exhibit, in every change of season, every variation of light and shade.*<sup>2</sup> He who has not an eye to observe these, and who cannot with a glance distinguish every diversity of every hue in her variety of beauties, must so far be deficient in *one of the essential qualities* of a poet.

"Here Pope, from infirmities, and from physical causes, was particularly deficient. When he left his own laurel circus at Twickenham, he was lifted into his chariot or his barge; and with weak eyes, and tottering strength, it is physically impossible he could be a *descriptive* bard. Where description has been introduced among his poems, as far as his observation could go, he excelled; more could not be expected. In the descriptions of the cloister, the scenes surrounding the melancholy convent, as far as could be gained by books, or suggested by imagination, he was eminently successful; but even here, perhaps, he only proved that he could not go far: and

'The streams that shine between the hills,  
The grotts that echo to the tinkling rills,'

were possibly *transcripts* of what he could most easily *transcribe*, his own views and scenery.

"But how different, how minute is his description, when he

<sup>1</sup> A few passages have been corrected, which were not accurately printed before:

<sup>2</sup> Upon consideration, I certainly think it right to omit the expression, "every leaf."



describes what he is master of: for instance, the game of Ombre, in the Rape of the Lock? This is from *artificial life*; and with artificial life, from his infirmities, he must have been chiefly conversant. But if he had been gifted with the same powers of observing outward Nature, I have no doubt he would have evinced as much accuracy in describing the appropriate and peculiar beauties, such as Nature exhibits in the Forest<sup>1</sup> where he lived, as he was able to describe, in a manner so novel, and with colors so vivid, a game of cards.<sup>2</sup>

"It is for this reason that his Windsor Forest, and his Pastorals, must ever appear so defective to a lover of Nature.

"Pope, therefore, wisely left *this part* of his art, which Thomson, and many other poets since his time, have cultivated with so much more success, and turned to what he calls the 'Moral' of the song.<sup>3</sup>

"I need not go regularly over his works; but I think they may be generally divided under the heads I have mentioned; —*Pathetic, Sublime, Descriptive, Moral, and Satirical.*

"In the pathetic, *poetically* considered, he stands highest; in the sublime, he is deficient; in descriptions from Nature, for reasons given, still more so. He therefore pursued that path in poetry, which was more congenial to his powers, and in which he has shone without a rival.

"We regret that we have little more, truly pathetic, from his pen, than the Epistle of Eloisa, the Elegy to the unfortunate Lady; and let me not forget one of the sweetest and most melodious of his pathetic effusions, the Address to Lord Oxford.

'Such were the notes thy once-lov'd Poet sung.'

"With the exception of these, and the Prologue to Cato, there are few things in Pope of the order I have mentioned, to which the recollection recurs with particular tenderness and delight.

"When he left these regions, to unite the most exquisite machinery of fancy with the descriptions of *artificial life*, the Rape of the Lock will, first and last, present itself;—a composition, as Johnson justly observes, the 'most elegant, the most airy,' of all his works; a composition, to which it will be in vain to compare any thing of the kind. He stands alone, unrivalled, and possibly never to be rivalled. All Pope's successful labor of correct and musical versification, all his talents of accurate description, though in an inferior province of poetry, are here consummately displayed; and as far as

<sup>1</sup> Windsor Forest.

<sup>2</sup> See Rape of the Lock, description of Ombre.

<sup>3</sup> But turn'd to truth, and moraliz'd the song.'

artificial life, that is, manners, not passions, are capable of being rendered poetical, they are here rendered so, by the fancy, the propriety, the elegance, and the poetic beauty of the Sylphic machinery.

"This 'delightful' poem, as I have said, appears to stand conspicuous and beautiful, in that medium where poetry begins to leave Nature, and *approximates to local manners*. The Muse has, indeed, no longer her great characteristic attributes, pathos or sublimity; but she appears so interesting, that we almost doubt whether the garb of elegant refinement is not as captivating, as the most beautiful appearances of Nature."

I have placed before the public, in one point of view, the greater part of what I advanced as the ground-work of my judgment on Pope's poetry; and I can ask whether they observe any symptoms of detraction or depreciation? I have spoken of the sublime, the pathetic, the moral, the satirical, and the descriptive, in poetry; *putting the descriptive province last*.

Now in your letter, my Lord, you have said nothing of the **SUBLIME** of poetry, as distinguishing the great poet, whose eminence in his art has led to this discussion; but I affirm, that in the pathetic, as he yields, (and the distance is great,) to Shakespeare, the variety of pathos in Shakespeare being considered; yet, if we view Pope's poems together, and remark his consummate **EXECUTION** of all he performed, though he is **INFERIOR** to Milton, and must be so, from the **SUPERIOR GRANDEUR** of Milton's subject, the greater exertion of talents required, "*according to the universal consent of the critics*," and the **EQUAL** execution; yet in one particular branch of his art, **SUBLIMITY**, he yields to Dryden, as well as to these great poets; and in another particular branch of his art, the accurate representation of picturesque imagery from external Nature, he yields to Thomson and Cowper.

As to sublimity, you will see I have spoken of his Ode, compared with one of Dryden's. Will you venture to say, the Ode for Music by Pope is equal to the Ode for Music by Dryden, Alexander's Feast, or that ode spoken of so enthusiastically by Dr. Johnson? I think you will hardly do this; and if you do, I believe, my Lord, no critic in England, or Europe, will agree with you.

I must here make one observation on Dryden's Ode on the death of Mrs. Killegrew. Johnson speaks of the first stanza, as full of enthusiasm, but his criticism is very unappropriate. I will venture to point out one great cause of its sublimity. Addressing the departed spirit, the poet exclaims,

"Whether adopted to some neighbouring star,  
Thou roll'st above us in thy wand'ring race,  
Or, in procession fix'd and regular,  
Movest with the heav'n's MAJESTIC PACE."

These are the images from the sublime of Nature, which give this ode its exalted character. I shall quote the first lines.

"Thou youngest virgin daughter of the skies,  
Made in the *last promotion of the blest*;  
Whose palms, new-pluck'd from Paradise,  
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,  
Rich with immortal green above the rest:  
Whether adopted to some neighb'ring star,  
Thou roll'st above us in thy wand'ring race,  
Or, in procession fix'd and regular,  
Movest with the heav'n's majestic pace;  
Or, call'd to more superior bliss,  
Thou tread'st with seraphims the vast abyss;  
Whatever happy region is thy place,  
Cease thy celestial song a little space."

Now take a stanza of a quite opposite character.

"The sylvan scenes of herds and flocks,  
And fruitful plains, and barren rocks;  
Of shallow brooks that flow'd so clear  
The bottom did the top appear;  
Of deeper, too, and ampler floods,  
Which as in mirrors show'd the woods;  
Of lofty trees, with sacred shades,  
And perspectives of pleasant glades,  
Where nymphs of brightest forms appear,  
And shaggy satyrs standing near,  
Which them at once admire and fear.  
The ruins too of some majestic place,  
Boasting the pow'r of ancient Rome or Greece,  
Whose statues, friezes, columns, broken lie,  
And, though defac'd, the wonder of the eye;  
What NATURE, ART, bold fiction e'er durst frame,  
Her forming hand gave feature to the name."

The commencement is lofty and majestic, and the execution goes on *pari passu* with the subject; and the subject is from the most glorious objects of contemplation in Nature. In the other stanza quoted, observe that the lady's art in painting as well as poetry is set before us, and this is done by making the subject of her pictures appear as in the living landscapes of NATURE:

"The shallow brooks that flow'd so clear, &c.  
Of deeper, too, and ampler floods,  
Which as in mirrors show'd the woods;  
The perspectives of pleasant glades,  
Where nymphs of brightest form appear  
And shaggy satyrs, &c."

Then the picturesque ruins are presented.

"The ruins too of some majestic place,  
Boasting the pow'r of ancient Rome or Greece,  
Whose statues, friezes, columns, broken lie, &c."

Dr. Johnson says, "the other stanzas are very "inferior,—inferior indeed:" and why are these superior? For this reason, because the highest views of human contemplation are opened in the first stanza, picturesque beauty in the last, and both according to NATURE.

The conclusion of this ode is in the high strain of the beginning; and yet, as objects of artificial life are less poetical than passions which belong to general Nature, the mind hardly admits the idea of "the last promotion," in the first stanza, or the word "*assizes*," relating to the great day of judgment, in the last; because with the expression "*assizes*" are associated the ideas of *artificial* life, the "judge's coach," and the javelin men.

I will now only request your Lordship to keep in mind what has been laid down: that Art is poetical, but Nature, in her sublime or beautiful features, with all their kindred associations, *more so*; that Art, in its combined appearances, is most poetical, when connected *with associations or views of* NATURE, and always, and under all circumstances, POETICAL, (unless the image be vulgar,) when ASSOCIATED with EMOTIONS and PASSIONS of the HUMAN HEART.

These are my premises: and having laid them down such as they cannot but be inferred from my original observations, unless garbled, I come to meet your Lordship on the fair ground of controversy.

On the subject of Pope's poetical character we agree. You say he is inferior to Milton and Shakespeare. This is all I asked. But the subject of our present discussion is, I think, at all events interesting. I have received much pleasure from your Lordship's letter; and though I well know your great powers, I feel, after a more vulgar contest, as "breathing a freer air."

The first question is, "Whether images from what is sublime or beautiful in Art or Nature," be, *per se*, the most poetical.

Upon this first point we join issue, and stand opposed. You have taken this first axiom, which I thought, if well considered, would not be contended, and have, without periphrasis, promptly and powerfully opposed it. But remark, this is only the first part of a general proposition, as will be seen by referring to what I have said. The other part will be, per-

haps, more clearly explained, as we proceed. But first of the first.

### LAUNCH OF THE BEAUTIFUL SHIP, CAMPBELL.

It must here be observed, that in answer to the first part of my proposition, Mr. Campbell instanced the launch of a ship, as a WORK OF ART, beautifully poetical. My answer, *taking his own description*, was, that the ship so beautifully described by him was *more* indebted to Nature than Art. It was indebted to Nature for the *winds*, that filled the sails; for the sunshine, that touched them with lights; for the waves, on which it so triumphantly rode; for the associated ideas of the distant regions of the earth it was to visit, the tempests it was to encounter, and for being, as it were, endued with existence, "a thing of life."

I think what was said was an answer to Mr. Campbell, and I think so still. What other arguments he might advance I know not. His ship, as described by himself, in my opinion totally failed; and I believe Mr. Campbell saw, upon reflec-

An attempt has lately been made to rob your Lordship of much of your originality as a poet. I have seen some extracts from a publication of this kind. Some of the examples are like the description of Monmouth. "Why is Macedon like Monmouth? because there is a river in Monmouth, and a river in Macedon." I have only seen a very few of these remarks. The beautiful image of the "ship," in the Corsair,

"That seems to walk the waves—a thing of life!" which would not be necessary for your Lordship to add, unless an image from Nature was *more* beautiful than any you brought in the description of a ship from Art: this "living ship, however, has been traced to Wilson," who has also a "living ship of loveliness." I forget the words; but if the image is to be taken from your Lordship *vi et armis*, I may as well make my demand: for in the poem, which, together with its unfortunate writer, formed part of your Satire, is the following description of "a ship" on her way:

"The tall ship,  
That, like a stately swan, in conscious pride,  
Breasts beautiful the rising surge, and throws  
The gather'd waters back, and seems to move  
A LIVING THING, upon its lucid way,  
Streaming in lovely glory to the morn."

The idea is the same: I objected to the words "lovely glory;" but somebody persuaded me to let them stay. But I do not believe that either your Lordship, or Mr. Wilson, borrowed from me; albeit, though, so to be told, your Lordship might smile.

I believe no mind, inclined to poetry, ever saw a ship in full sail, but has felt the propriety of the image.

I take this opportunity of thanking your Lordship for remembering the little anecdote, which I mentioned merely for the sake of showing the disadvantage of implicitly relying on the Reviews. Your recollection is better than mine. But the mode in which the circumstance had been commented on, was *gratuitously ill-natured*, for it had nothing to do with the criticism.

tion, that his new-launched ship, and even if it had braved, for a thousand years,

“The BATTLE and the BREEZE,”

must have surrendered.

Mr. Campbell declined, at least, further contest; whether because he would not, or because he thought he *could* not, is of no consequence. Your Lordship implies that he would not; I am bold to say he could not: and I am bolder to say, I think even your Lordship cannot.

Under its new, and gallant, and dauntless, and experienced, and NOBLE Captain, the battle is now to be fought again. And though years have made some impression, and different tracks of study have taken me far away from the scene of such discussions, and even desuetude from such contest be something; and disinclination more; yet, my Lord,

“Maugre your youth, strength, fortune, eminence—”

not unconscious of your powers, but more conscious of the soundness of my cause, I venture to meet you.

Before I examine your arguments, my first object will be to do them *perfect justice*, to place them in their full force, and not only to do so, but, if I doubt the meaning, to give the *substance* in my own language, that it may be seen whether I perfectly understand them or not.

This I think due to every one, whose sentiments I might be called upon to oppose, more especially due to a person like your Lordship; and if such fairness, or any thing like such *fairness*, had been used towards me, I should not have been assailed by so many flippant fallacies, so many gross and palpable perversions.

The substance of your arguments, detached from the *jokes*, I conceive to be as follows.—

The ship gives as much *beauty* to the *waters* as it receives from them. If the SUN were taken away, what then? The ship, if I understand your Lordship, would not be seen. If Mr. Bowles's pamphlet was not read by the light of the sun, it must be read by candle-light!! Allow me to substitute for Mr. Bowles's pamphlet Lord Byron's poems. No *beauty* is added to *them* by the sun; for whether they are read by sun-light or candle-light, they are equally beautiful. I have read them by both: But the sun adds beauty to a ship; therefore this argument, which I think must be written by candle-light, does *not hold*; for it is as clear as “the SUN AT NOON-DAY,” that “the sun” neither gives nor takes from the beauty of Lord Byron's poems, let them be read where they will; but it does give beauty, essential beauty, to the ship.

2nd. Thousands of people went to see the launch of the

ship, who would not look upon the sea, particularly as it was *calm*, and *calm* water might be seen in the London Dock, Paddington Canal, a horse-pond, a slop-basin, or in any *other* vessel!

3rd. The wind that filled the sails of the ship, might be heard through the chinks of a PIGSTY; and the sun might shine on a BRASS WARMING-PAN!

This, I conceive, my Lord, is the substance of your argument; which, if it had come from any one but yourself, I should have thought scarcely worth answering: as an argument, the bare statement almost confutes it. The least *fair discussion* will shatter it to rags, reduce it to the *blue bunting* of which the streamer of the ship is composed, and I had almost said, make it to be consigned to that "*other vessel*," whatever it be, which has so *facetiously* entered your Lordship's high poetical *imagination*. Allow me first to show you what you have *not* done, before I examine what you have done, by way of argument.

You have not answered, nor attempted to answer, all the arguments which have been already brought forward on *this* occasion.

Mr. Campbell, in his description of the ship, spoke not only of the effect of the sun, the seas, and the wind, but added other ideas: its visiting the remote parts of the earth, the tempests it might encounter, and described it, in his poetical vision, "a thing of life." I said, the ideas of its visiting distant regions were ideas from Nature, which conspire to make this sight *more* interesting to the poet's thoughts, and therefore more poetical."

These you have not touched; and I am sure, if you had, and could bring no arguments but from Paddington Canal, &c. my "fortress" would not have much to fear from your Lordship's somewhat grotesque battery. Whatever motive Mr. Campbell had for not defending his own Seventy-four, I think your Lordship, in argument at least, has not succeeded, however delightful your publication may be in other respects.

And now, my Lord, to point *our* guns, to open our fire, and endeavour to blow your PIG-STIES, "BRASS WARMING-PANS, and THAT OTHER VESSEL," into shatters.

But, let be me fair; let the reader compare what you advance with the substance I have given.

"Mr. Bowles asserts, that Campbell's 'Ship of the Line' derives all its poetry not from 'Art,' but from 'Nature.'"

'Take away the waves, the winds, the sun, &c. &c. one will become a stripe of blue bunting; and the other a piece of coarse canvass on three tall poles.' Very true; take away the 'waves,' the 'winds,' and there will be no ship at all, not only for poetical, but for any other purpose; and take away 'the sun,' and we must read Mr. Bowles's pamphlet by candle-light. But the 'poetry' of the 'Ship' does *not* depend on 'the waves,' &c.; on the contrary, the 'Ship of the Line' confers its own poetry upon the waters, and heightens *theirs*. I do not deny that the 'waves and winds,' and above all 'the sun,' are highly poetical; we know it to our cost, by the many descriptions of them in verse; but if the waves bore only the foam upon their bosoms, if the winds wafted only the sea-weed to the shore, if the sun shone neither upon pyramids, nor fleets, nor fortresses, would its beams be equally poetical? I think not: the poetry is at least reciprocal. Take away 'the Ship of the Line' 'swinging round' the 'calm water,' and the calm water becomes a somewhat monotonous thing to look at, particularly if not transparently *clear*; witness the thousands who pass by without looking on it at all. What was it attracted the thousands to the launch? they might have seen the poetical 'calm water' at Wapping, or in the 'London Dock,' or in the Paddington Canal, or in a horse-pond, or in a slop-basin, or in any other vase. They might have heard the poetical winds howling through the chinks of a pigsty, or the garret window; they might have seen the sun shining on a footman's livery, or on a brass warming-pan; but could the 'calm water,' or the 'wind,' or the 'sun,' make all, or any of these poetical? I think not. Mr. Bowles admits 'the Ship' to be poetical, but only from those accessories: now if they *confer* poetry so as to make one thing poetical, they would make other things poetical; the more so, as Mr. Bowles calls a 'Ship of the Line' without them, that is to say, its 'masts, and sails, and streamers,' 'blue bunting,' and 'coarse canvass,' and 'tall poles.' So they are; and porcelain is clay, and man is dust, and flesh is grass; and yet the two latter at least are the subjects of much poesy."

The commencement, my Lord, is ominous. Mr. Bowles never said, nor is it consistent with the principles he has adopted to say, Mr. Campbell's ship *derives* ALL its poetry from Nature. If this misstatement, *in principio*, was intentional, I need not have appealed to you for my character of candor.

Mr. Bowles said, and says, that poetical beauty in a ship "*depends* not on Art but Nature." ALL its poetry, he



instantly admits, it does not derive from Nature; but its poetical beauty *depends* upon Nature; for the sails would not swell, the streamers would not flow, the motion would cease—its LIFE, which Mr. Campbell speaks of, would be extinct.

But you say the poetry of the ship does not *depend* on the waves, &c. I think it does, for this reason,—that all this beauty, motion, and life, would be at once lost and extinct. True, nor can I for a moment think otherwise; thus seen, and thus associated, “the ship confers its own poetry upon the waters, and heightens theirs,” but NOT BEFORE the *elements of Nature* have ENABLED IT TO DO SO; and, therefore, its primary poetical beauty *depends* on Nature, not Art.

You say, take away the WINDS and waves, and there will be NO SHIP at all! Then its *very existence depends* on them! And “take away the sun, and you must read Mr. Bowles’s pamphlet by candle-light.” Read it how or when you will, the sun will be more poetical than a candle; and the seas, that “speak in the EAST and the WEST AT ONCE,” will not depend on the ship for poetical sublimity, (but the ship will on them,) any more than the sun will *depend* upon Lord Byron’s poetry. And then I ask you, my Lord, this question, (begging you to remember my principles only require that the works of Nature, which are beautiful and sublime, are *more* poetical, *abstractedly*, than any works of Art,)—whether the sun, the waves, and winds are, *per se*, more poetical without the ship, or the ship, *per se*, without the waves, &c. &c.? The poetry, therefore, is not reciprocal; for the ship can give no beauty till the elements of Nature, on which its beauty depends, enable it to do so. Then it gives and receives. But, my Lord, you must remember, that when I answered Mr. Campbell, (and I do not think either he or your Lordship can make my good ship surrender,) he made no distinction at all, but colored his rich descriptions with all the hues of Nature, and then advanced to show the poetical beauties of ART.

But the water is *calm*, and its monotony requires to be broken; and this “*calmness*,” which is one feature of this mighty element, may be contemplated at Wapping, in the London Dock, Paddington Canal, a horse-pond, or any other vessel!

No: for though the water at Wapping, the London Dock, in the Paddington Canal, a HORSE-POND, or any OTHER vessel, be *calm*, it is *not poetical*. But your argument is this: “The sea is *calm*; the water in a horse-pond, or any other

vessel, is calm; therefore the calm water in a horse-pond is as poetical as the sea!" No, my Lord: for the sea cannot be made unpoetical, and your great powers cannot make the water in a *horse-pond*, or ANY OTHER VESSEL, poetical: and I will conclude with Cowper's description of the calm sea, whom, however, you call NO POET, and whom I think an original, pathetic, and great poet.

"OCEAN exhibits, fathomless and broad,  
Much of the *power* and *majesty* of God!  
He swathes about the swelling of the deep,  
That shines and rests, as infants smile and sleep.  
Vast as it is, it answers, as it flows,  
The breathings of the lightest air that blows.  
Curling and whitening over all the waste,  
The rising waves obey the increasing blast."

But we must stop before the storm comes on, for I wish only to show how this "*monotonous*" object can, in its calmest state, and without a single ship, or any accompaniments, be rendered *poetical*.

In fact, it does not seem to me, that your Lordship makes distinction between the SEA in painting, and the SEA in poetry.

"The sun is poetical," by your Lordship's admission; and to *our cost*, you say, by the many descriptions in verse. To which sentence I do not accede, as we possibly might have lost some of your own most beautiful descriptions. But to follow your argument.

"If the waves bore only foam upon their bosoms; if the winds wafted only sea-weed to the shore; if the sun shone neither upon pyramids, nor fleets, nor fortresses, would its beams be *equally* poetical?" Answer:—

The sun would be equally poetical, let it shine on what it may. If the waves bore only foam upon their bosoms, the ocean would be equally sublime, far from every track of vessel, every intrusion of man.

The ocean, I affirm, wants not the accessories of any thing *human* to make it *SUBLIME*, and therefore poetical. It is poetical, though not equally *picturesque* or beautiful, with or without them. The ideas it excites of Almighty power are those of *sublimity*, the highest poetical sublimity, which proudly rejects any associations or accessories of human art, or of human kind, to make it more so. "*The deep uttereth his voice*," is one of the most sublime of the many sublime passages relating to it in the scriptures. We have no occasion to make it *more* poetical to say, "there go the ships;" but the ship, moving beautiful to the sight, and almost seeming,

as it were, a creature of the vast element, and made doubly interesting, as an object of beauty, by those accessories of Nature, without which it is nothing; a ship so seen adds to the picture of *poetical* beauty, but *not* to the more awful ideas of *SUBLIMITY*, which are far *more poetical*. In sunshine, in calm, in tempest, by night, by day, in its *deepest solitudes*, it wants nothing of Art to make it *sublime*, as speaking every where, "in the east and in the west," in the north and the south, with one everlasting voice, "Infinitude and Power." What can be more sublime than this verse of the Psalmist? "If I take the wing of the morning, and dwell in the *UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE SEA*, even there shall thy hand lead me."

The studies of my profession have carried me to the consideration of all the ancient heresies. The Valentinian Creed proclaims, "In the beginning were *DEPTH*, and *SILENCE*!"<sup>1</sup> Endless space, and eternal silence! and these ideas alone are *SUBLIME*. How directly and gloriously opposed to this idea is the opening of the gospel of St. John. "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was GOD." And sublime as the former ideas may be, because they are connected with *terror*, the passage from St. John is far more striking; seeming like an echo to the words, "And God said, Let there be *LIGHT*: and there WAS *LIGHT*!"—a God, and a Creator, and a Saviour, *REVEALED*.

I hope, as your Lordship, in your pamphlet, professes so great a regard for *ETHICS*, and ethic poetry, in which I most cordially agree, this observation will be excused.

To return: "if the waves bore only foam upon their bosoms;"—"if the winds wafted only sea-weed to the shore;"—"if the sun had neither pyramids, nor fleets, nor fortresses, to shine upon;" if it shone upon none of the emblems of earth, man, or his little works; it would be equally a stupendous object, in the visible creation, *per se*, abstractedly, and equally *SUBLIME*; and it would be poetical, equally poetical, whether it shone on pyramids or *posts*, fortresses, or "pigsties," a "brass warming-pan, or a footman's livery," though neither pigsties, or posts, *could* be sublime or beautiful, with or without it.

Pyramids, I repeat, are *most poetical* from associations; and fortresses also: but brass warming-pans are images of *in-door* Nature, and footmen's liveries are images of "*artificial*" life; and to say, that, because the sun can make one object poetical, it must necessarily make *ANOTHER* so, is not an argument worthy of Lord Byron; and I am afraid we must say of

<sup>1</sup> These ideas in the *VALENTINIAN* Creed were personified.

the "sun" shining upon your "warming-pan" and "footman's livery," as of the "hog in a high wind,"

"It grieves me much, replied the Clerk again,  
Who speaks so well, should ever speak in vain."

But how much genuine poetry is condensed in one line, where a ship is spoken of,

"SAILING IN SUNSHINE, FAR AWAY!"

As for the sun on Mr. Campbell's ship, if the ship did not want the sun, to give it more poetical interest, why did Mr. Campbell think it necessary to introduce the sun at all? "But the ship *gives*, as well as it *receives*:" so seen, it gives beauty, animating beauty, to the *seas*, not to the sun. It gives back, indeed, and amply repays what it receives; but does a brass warming-pan give back any poetical beauty?

"The sun shines white upon the rocks!"

The sun shines white upon the *warming-pan*:

and so the sun shines on Dr. Syntax's wig; but try the effect,

"Pale on the lone tower falls the evening beam."

Pale on my *grey-wig* falls the evening beam.

Therefore Mr. Campbell introduced the sun needlessly, if it did not make the ship more poetical; but though the ship (being itself especially so adorned, as if it came and went NATURE's chief favorite and delight among the works of art) gives, as well as it receives, beauty; a footman's livery does not do so, my Lord, any more than an old wig, upon which the sun equally shines, as on the Hellespont, or the crest of Hector.

As to seas without a ship, or with a ship upon the stocks, I appeal to our friend Crabbe. He is my neighbour; and though we scarce ever talk of criticism, in his absence I may venture to quote a little from a poem of his, as the description bears on the point; and your Lordship does not, I believe, reckon him among those whom you are pleased to call "naturals." He describes the sea in such a manner as I think might rival the greatest poet that ever lived. He shall give us the sea *without a ship*; and what is more to the purpose, a ship ON THE STOCKS!

"The sea without a ship."

"With ceaseless motion comes and goes the tide,  
Flowing it fills the channel VAST and WIDE;  
Then back to sea with strong majestic sweep  
It ROLLS, in ebb, yet terrible and deep!"

I need not point out to your Lordship the effect of the metre, and the imagery:

VOL. XVIII.

Pam.

NO. XXXVI.

Z

" THEN BACK to SEA with strong majestic sweep  
IT ROLLS."

Next we have a little of ART.

" Here samphire banks, and salt-wort bound the flood,  
Here STAKES," &c.

I will leave Crabbe a moment; and as your Lordship seems to think, (mistaking, it appears to me, the *poetical* for the *picturesque*,) that the sea is *more poetical* (more picturesque it certainly is) *with ships* than without them, I will take an exquisite picture, which you may possibly recognise.

" He that has sail'd upon the dárk blue sea,  
Has view'd at times, I ween, a full fair sight;  
When the fresh breeze is fair as breeze may be,  
The white sail set, the gallant frigate tight;  
Masts, spires, and strand retiring to the right,  
The glorious main expanding o'er the bow,  
The convoy spread like wild swans in their flight,  
The dullest sailer wearing bravely now,  
So gaily curl the waves before each dashing prow."

*Childe Harold.*

I fear your Lordship *with your ships* will have it *hollow*; but before I go back to Crabbe, to have fair play, I would take another picture from Dyer; which, except your Lordship's, is the finest description in the world. " Now," &c.

" Glide the tall fleet into the widening main,  
A floating forest: ev'ry sail unfurl'd,  
Swells to the wind—&c.

.....  
Meantime in pleasing course the pilot steers,  
STEADY, with eye intent upon the steel,  
STEADY before the winds the pilot steers,  
While gaily o'er the waves the mountain prow  
Dance, like a shoal of DOLPHINS, and begin  
To streak with various paths the hoary deep.  
Yet steady o'er the waves they steer, and now  
The fluctuating WORLD of WATERS WIDE,  
IN BOUNDLESS MAGNITUDE, around them swell,  
O'er whose imaginary brim, nor TOWNS,  
Nor WOODS, nor mountain top, nor ought appears,  
But *Phæbus orb, refulgent lamp* of light.

MILLIONS OF LEAGUES ALOFT."

Hang "Phœbus" and refulgent "*lamp*!" But do you not think the latter part of this description *most poetical*, with the boundless seas, and the sun's sole orb, as it would be, if accompanied with the gondolas of Venice, or if the ships were entirely omitted, though not so BEAUTIFULLY picturesque?

The ships, however, are still careering in the breeze and sunshine, therefore we will return for a moment to CRABBE, to show some of the infinitude of this said SEA's poetical beauties without ships.

"Turn to the watery world!—but who to thee  
 (A wonder yet unview'd) shall paint the Sea!  
*Various and vast, sublime in all its forms,*  
 When lull'd by zephyrs, or when rous'd by storms,  
 Its colors changing, when from clouds and sun,  
*Shades after shades upon the surface run;*  
 Embrown'd and horrid now, and now serene,  
 In limpid blue, and evanescent green;  
 And oft the foggy banks on ocean lie,  
 Lift the far sail, and cheat the experienc'd eye.  
 Then the broad bosom of the ocean keeps  
 An equal motion, swelling as it sleeps;  
 Then slowly sinking, curling to the strand,  
 Faint, lazy waves o'ercreep the ridgy sand,  
 Or tap the tarry boat with gentle blow,  
 And back return in silence, smooth and slow.  
 Ships in the calm seem anchor'd, for they glide  
 On the still sea, urg'd solely by the tide:  
 Art thou not present, this calm scene before,  
 Where all beside is pebbly length of shore,  
 And far as eye can reach, it can discern no more." }

This, 'to be sure, is not entirely an ocean view, without boats or ships; but how exquisitely, how beautifully, is every thing touched! Can you make Paddington Canal as beautiful or sublime?

Now then for a vessel on the stocks.

"Near these a crew amphibious in the docks  
 Rear, for the sea, those castles on the stocks:  
 See! the long keel, which soon the waves must hide  
 See! the strong ribs which form the roomy side,  
 Bolts yielding slowly to the sturdiest stroke,  
 And planks which curve and crackle in the smoke;  
 Around the whole rise cloudy wreaths, and far  
 Bear the warm pungence of o'er-boiling tar."

Paint your ship on the stocks how you will, which of these pictures is most sublime or beautiful?

In fact, there is not a sight so awful, so sublime, or so terrible, as the ocean. And, therefore, in its infinite shades and appearances, it exhibits in all, indeed,

"MUCH OF THE POWER and majesty of God."

It is by itself more poetical, far more poetical, than a ship with it or without it,—which is my proposition.

And now, my Lord, one word or two about "THE WIND."  
 "The thousands that came to see the ship launched, the sails streaming in the wind, might have heard the wind, through the chinks of a pigsty!" HUDIBRAS observes,

"As pigs are said to SEE THE WIND."

Did this thought occur, when your Lordship associated the "wind" and the "pigsty" so ingeniously and sublimely? True; the thousands who were attracted to see "the launch" might

have heard the "winds through a pigsty;" and they certainly did not go to *hear* the *wind*, or to see the sea, which, as you justly observe, "thousands pass, without looking on it at all." Is it less sublime for that? Of all the thousands who saw the beautiful sight of this ship-launch, who among them saw it with the eye, and heart, and feelings of Mr. Campbell? He has painted it, and in painting it, shown the eye and heart of a poet; but the thousands who went to see the sight, would probably have gone to see KATTERFELTO perform some of his wonders,

"Wond'ring for his bread,"

as readily as to the launch of this ship, so far as *poetical* interest excited them. But whether they came or staid at home, whether the ship was launched or not, the sun was not less sublime, though *beauty* was added to the waves.

As to the *winds*, independent of their effect on the sails of a ship, they are poetical or not, as their sound is associated in the poet's fancy. When poor TOM sings,

"Hark! through the hawthorn blows the cold wind;"

Let us try the effect of a different association, according to your Lordship's ideas, and for the hawthorn add an image from "artificial life."

"Hark! through the 'pigsty' blows the cold wind!"

Is the wind equally poetical? In fact, my proposition is proved, if I may say so, to the right and the left; and before some little "logic," your "pigsty," your "garret window," your "footman's livery," your "brass warming-pan," are all blown away to *the winds*.

Much as I admire, my Lord, your talents, I think you must have produced such arguments without reflection; if you meant ME, in any part of that quotation, wherein you pleasantly apply the words,

"Quoth he, there was a SHIP;

Now let me go, thou GREY-HAIRED LOON,

Or MY STAFF shall make thee SKIP:"

I answer, though my "hairs, alas! are grey," your staff has not made me SKIP AN INCH. What, if I should almost begin to think, I might make even him who swam over the Hellespont "skip!" But I fear, if I may be thought to have the least advantage, it is because your Lordship has not looked at the question on *all sides*; or remembered the plain words of my proposition; otherwise you would not have amused your admirers at my expense with such a hodge-podge of suns, winds, seas, Wapping, London Docks, Paddington Canals, pigsties, garret windows, horse-ponds, slop-basins, and

OTHER VESSELS, "footmen's livery," and "brass warming-pans."

But it is time to leave the coast of England, fruitful in such homely images, and accompany your Lordship to the

#### COAST OF ATTICA—TEMPLE OF THESEUS, &c.

"The beautiful but barren HYMETTUS, the whole coast of Attica, her HILLS, and mountains, Pentelicus, Anchesmus, Philopappus, &c. are in themselves poetical, and would be so, if the name of Athens, of Athenians, and HER VERY RUINS, were swept from the earth."—*Lord Byron.*

"But am I to be told, (you proceed) that the "nature" of Attica would be *more* poetical without the ART of the Acropolis? of the Temple of Theseus? of the still all great and glorious monuments of exquisitely artificial skill? Ask the traveller which strikes him most as *poetical*, the Parthenon, or the hill on which it stands? The columns of Lake Colonna, or the lake itself; the rocks at the foot of it, or the recollection that Falconer's *ship* was bulged upon them? There are a thousand rocks and capes more picturesque than those of the Acropolis and Cape Sunium in themselves; what are they to a thousand scenes in the wilder parts of Greece, of Asia Minor, Switzerland, or even Cintra in Portugal, or to many scenes of Italy, and the Sierras of Spain?

"But it is the *art*, the columns, the temples, the *wrecked* vessel, which give them their antique and their modern poetry; and not the spots themselves; without them the *spots of earth* would be unnoticed and unknown; buried, like Babylon and Nineveh, in indistinct confusion, without poetry, as without existence; but to whatever spot of earth these ruins were transported, if they were capable of transportation, like the Obelisk, and the Sphinx, and the Memnon's Head, there they would still exist in the perfection of their beauty, and in the pride of their poetry."

I here set before the reader the whole of this passage, because it is itself so beautiful. It is worthy Lord Byron, and is as forcible as it is eloquent, and picturesque as it is argumentative. I need not enter into an analysis to show that I understand it, for I understand it in its full force; and though I have not seen these places but in Lord Byron's interesting pictures, and even in this splendid assemblage I hope I am not so insensible, (such a "natural,") as not to feel how poetical and affecting are those scattered columns, those temples, in those spots, where, *nescio quomodo movemur*, &c.; I can at least say, though I have not seen them, *animum*



*picture pascit inani*. I might add, *non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora*: and what I feel cannot better be described than in the vivid painting of kindred scenes by a poet whom I have quoted.

“Behold the pride of pomp,  
The throne of nations fall’n; obscur’d in dust,  
E’en yet majestic: the solemn scene  
ELATES THE SOUL, while now the RISING SUN  
Flames on the ruins, in the purer AIR,  
Tow’ring aloft, upon the glitt’ring plain,  
Like broken rocks, a vast circumference,  
Rent PALACES, crush’d COLUMNS, rifted moles,  
Fanes roll’d on fanes, and tombs on buried tombs.  
Deep lies in dust the Theban Obelisk  
Immense along the waste; *minuter art*,  
Gleconian forms, or Phidian, subtly fair  
O’erwhelming; as the immense Leviathan,  
Outstretch’d, unwieldy, his island length uprears  
Above the foamy flood.....  
Grey mould’ring temples swell, and wide o’ercast  
The solitary landscape, hills, and woods,  
And boundless wilds, &c.”—*Dyer’s Ruins of Rome*.

With such feelings, and affected by such images so distinctly and beautifully set before us, where nature and art contend in what is most striking and affecting in the imagery of either, I read your animated description. I concede, *instantly*, that the “nature” of Attica would not be *more poetical* without the “art” of the Acropolis, or the Temple of Theseus, or the still great and glorious monuments of her exquisitely artificial genius. I concede this; but I deny, that, *abstractedly*, as works of Art, these works are as sublime, or, therefore, as *poetical*, as the sublimest images from Nature. Of the rocks on which they stand, I know nothing: in sublimity or beauty they may bear as little comparison as a piece of Pentelican marble such as it is in nature, and Pentelican marble formed into an august temple or statue. No one can deny this: but if you take the *highest works* of Art, with all their poetical associations; and compare them with the “spots” of earth, where Babylon and Nineveh are buried; the spots as spots, and the ruins as ruins, cannot be compared; but compare the most sublime of the objects of Art, either abstractedly, that is, without any poetical associations, or with associations, and I deny the major part of your arguments *in toto*; or that the sublimest works of Art, be they where or what they may, are *more* sublime than the most sublime of the works of Nature. And I again affirm, that what is sublime or beautiful, *per se*, in the works of Nature, *comparatis comparandis*, is *more* sublime or beautiful than any works of Art, and also in their associa-

tions, one leading the thought to GOD, and the other to man: and I answer, if you adduce the Temple of Theseus, give me the *Temple of the Universe, not made with hands*, and your temple will be as insignificant as the dust of the marble that composes it.

But, without going so far at present, I will ask your Lordship (and no one is a better judge), whom you think the most sublime of all poets, living or dead,—the most sublime, without exception? Whom would Pope call so? One of those mighty spirits, which has given these poetical scenes, with their temples and columns, half their poetical interest. Shall I say Homer? will you admit this?

Then I ask, if so, how comes it to pass, that the greatest poet the world has produced, wrote before the existence of any ARTS, at least in such perfection? Of rapidity and greatness of events, variety of character, wonderful invention, command of passions, and affecting incidents, we are not here speaking. And I must beg you, my Lord, to remember this, lest I might be told, that I assert that descriptions of external Nature are those which give the chief sublimity to the poems of Homer.

Further, I say that all the illustrious images you have called up from the august remains of ancient art, are connected with *poetical passions*; and these passions are the emotions of *Nature*, from a thousand affecting connexions: and I say, putting passions out of the question, that, in description of external Nature, and of the gods themselves, without being indebted to any temples, or statues of them, Homer stands, with the exception of Milton, the sole and mightiest master of his art (of which external Nature makes a great part) in the world. Let the temples of Art, and the statues of gods, be as beautiful or sublime as they may, how came Homer, in his descriptions, (not of what is *natural*, his Jack-Ass and Boar similies,) but in the most beautiful and sublime objects in Nature,—the *θηνα πολυφλοςβοιο θαλασσης*—the beautiful piece by moonlight,—the sublimity of Jupiter or Neptune,—to be the most poetical painter in the world? especially of the god whose statue has given immortality to the name of Phidias? I need not inform your Lordship, that the Jupiter of Homer was the original of the Jupiter of Phidias.

Did Homer, then, exceed every poet in every part of his art? “I think so.” Then, if it was before the appearance of such images of Art, as your Lordship has so described, “images taken from what is sublime or beautiful in Nature must have been *more poetical, per se*, than any images derived from Art.” To proceed:—

What are all the gods of Homer,<sup>1</sup> in the description of whom he has so wonderfully excelled, from the Supreme Deity to the Lord of the Ocean, and to the inferior deities of the sea or skies? what are these but personifications of some of the elements of Nature? But we may have more to say of this hereafter. To follow the argument:—

Secondly, I would observe “of your richest assemblage of works of Art,” as *more poetical* than the *spots* where they are, this may be true. But let us leave these “*spots*,” as they are called. Let us leave Greece, or even the wild Sierras of Spain, and pass to America. Mark the vast Mississippi or Missouri, pouring their ocean-like waters, from interior sources, through regions “dark with shades of eternal forests!” Hear the astounding fall and torrent roar of the stupendous Niagara! Call up your Phidias, let him form a god there! Call up him who placed Memnon’s Head in the desert, and left his name unknown for ever! Call up the builders of those temples and columns, the description of which gives your pictures such interest; will their works add to the magnificence of Nature, or make it *more poetical*, where the character of the scenery is already on the highest scale of magnificence? “*Manifestations of mind!*” What are the manifestations of the human mind in St. Peter’s, the Coliseum, the Pantheon, in the Venus, to the manifestations of the power and the majesty of the Godhead in all his works?

Thirdly. The “*ruins*,” you say, are as *poetical* in Piccadilly as they are in the Parthenon. “Its rocks are *less so* without them.” Of that I have no doubt; but the rock is not the sublimest of rocks, though the ruins are the sublimest remains of the works of Art; and this is scarcely, as I have said, a fair way of stating the comparison: add, that the ruins themselves are more poetical from associations, than from their intrinsic sublimity; they indeed stand “alone in the world,” as Rogers, speaking of the “Torso,” has finely said. I must have the most sublime and beautiful of objects to meet them in the visible creation; and if these will not do, (but I think the sun and the seas quite sufficient,) I might rise, as I have remarked,

“FROM NATURE, UP TO NATURE’S GOD!”

to the far more sublime, and therefore *more poetical*, ideas of ALMIGHTY power, and the IMMENSITY of HIS WORKS, who “walketh upon the wings of the wind.”

<sup>1</sup> The Arms, &c. will be considered, when we speak of the spear of Achilles.

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good,  
 Almighty, thine this universal frame,  
 Thus wond'rous fair; Thyself how wondrous then!  
 Unspeakable, who sit'st above these heav'ns  
 To us invisible, or dimly seen  
 In these thy lowest works; yet these declare  
 Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine."

MILTON.

### VENICE, &c.

I have followed you, with delight, my Lord, over the course you have taken since we left the pigsties; but I have to offer some reflections that prevent my coming to your conclusions.

We are now at the gay and glittering Venice.

"And the CHILD stood upon the BRIDGE OF SIGHS;"

Does its poetical beauty depend upon the sea and canals? —Answer. Take the sea away, let it be of what color it may, and even Venice would possibly be less poetical. But why canals? These are *dug* by labor. Take away the sea, and will not Venice, in its aspect, be *less* poetical? "Is it 'the canal which makes it *poetical*?' Certainly not. For I can conceive nothing in the visible world, notwithstanding its water, so unpoetical as an artificial canal; to add to its interest, creeping, in a straight line, between a row of houses, with a palace on one side, and a prison on the other. The CANAL, or the Bridge of Sighs! Oh! the Bridge of Sighs against all the world. The very name is poetical, and that of *canal* is quite the contrary. A bridge alone is beautiful and picturesque, and so far poetical; but the clearness of the water, the moving objects, the verdure, or trees, or, if you please, the *boats* near it, perhaps a solitary fisherman, make it *more poetical*.

I never saw Venice but in a "*picture*," though I assure you I have seen the sea. A bridge in a city is not so *poetical*, half so poetical, as a bridge out of a city, or near the suburbs; how much more poetical Westminster bridge, for this reason than London bridge.

But the "Canal Grande" gives me only the idea of that *least* poetical of American rivers, called by the romantic name of the "Big Muddy."

At Venice, your Lordship is apparently at home; and I have never seen that singular and beautiful city, except as it appears in the paintings of Canaletti. There, I think, nothing ever appeared so unpicturesque and unpoetical. How little do these paintings resemble in beauty the works of Claude, where the admixture of buildings, trees, cattle, &c.

is so *poetical*! It must also be remembered, in the peculiar situation of this unique city, every thing appears on the side of ART, and scarce any thing on the side of NATURE; one is exalted, and the other depressed. The sea, instead of rolling and rocking in splendor, becomes a great ditch, divided into other ditches, and the eye is, *per force*, carried away from the insipidities of Nature *in this spot* to the decorations of ART; and if ART ever obtained a transient triumph over NATURE, on the side of the sea, it must have been in this corner of the Adriatic.

If I had seen it, I might paint its gondolas, sparkling in the sun, as they pass and repass each other; the oar, dipped in unison to the distant song, that rose over the waves; the sea, kissing, as in homage, the feet of his mistress, and putting off, as in humility, all his richest and proudest attire of beauty.

But I could not paint it as Lord Byron has done; and something ought to be allowed to his glowing and partial pencil.

Having requested the reader to bear in mind these material observations, I confess, if Lord Byron's picture be faithful as far as we might judge from this *particular spot*, and under these particular circumstances, ART might have a transient triumph. Lord Byron, however, must be heard.—

“There can be nothing more poetical in its aspect than the city of Venice: does this depend upon the sea, or the canals?

‘The dirt and sea-weed whence proud Venice rose!’

Is it the canal which runs between the palace and the prison, or the ‘Bridge of Sighs,’ which connects them, that render it poetical? Is it the ‘Canal Grande,’ or the Rialto which arches it, the churches which tower over it, the palaces which line, and the gondolas which glide over, the waters, that render this city more poetical than Rome itself? Mr. Bowles will say, perhaps, that the Rialto is but marble, the palaces and churches only stone, and the gondolas a ‘coarse’ black cloth, thrown over some planks of carved wood, with a shining bit of fantastically formed iron at the prow, ‘*without*’ the water. And I tell him, that without these the water would be nothing but a clay-colored ditch; and whoever says the contrary, deserves to be at the bottom of that, where Pope's heroes are embraced by the mud nymphs. There would be nothing to make the canal of Venice more poetical than that of Paddington, were it not for the artificial adjuncts above-mentioned; although it is a perfectly natural canal, formed by the sea, and the innumerable islands which constitute the site of this extraordinary city.”

But if this be so in one particular spot, and under peculiar circumstances of depression on one side, and exaltation, and a coloring, perhaps, somewhat partial, on the other, the general principle is not affected, that "what is sublime or beautiful in works of Nature, is more *poetical* than any works of Art!" It might *not* be so in a particular angle of Europe, in that particular spot, compared with those particular features; but the general principle will not be affected; and I have doubts whether Venice, brilliant as she is, might not look small by the side of the blue and billowy Pacific. I therefore hold it not certain, that Lord Byron has gained a triumph for the cause he espouses, even at this his favorite and unique city, but I contend, if it be so *there*, the general principle is not altered. The embrace of the Mud Nymphs, therefore, for the present, I think I may decline, with your Lordship's permission; and I was almost about to add, concerning this embrace, "DETUR DIGNIORI!"

#### CITY OF ROME, THE CLOACA, &c.

But from the gay and glittering Queen of the Adriatic; where do your Lordship's eccentric wanderings take us now?

To Rome, and the Cloaca at Rome! The city of Rome, with its scattered remains of ancient grandeur,

"Fall'n columns, broken arches, spread,"

"Spirat adhuc Imperiosa minas."

But, if cities are considered *poetically*, it must be for their picturesque, and so far "poetical," beauty, like Venice and Constantinople. Seen at a distance, when their appearance harmonizes with the sky, they are most interesting and poetical: the ART of the buildings is lost sight of; and a thousand circumstances of light and shade, glittering towers or cupolas, have an effect of making us entirely overlook the work of Art, whilst their most picturesque features blend with the distance into the beauties of NATURE. But the distinction ought always to be kept in mind, of what is most sublime or beautiful in Nature being compared with what is sublime in Art; and you, my Lord, without regard to this obvious distinction, take your city, and without discrimination of what is most picturesque or poetical even in a city, demand, "what are the seven hills without the 'CITY?'" As you make no discrimination, I will; a distant city is much more poetical than one close in sight; the intermixture of water or trees, as in Claude's landscapes, takes off and subdues the glare of nearer Art. The different points of elevation that catch the light; smoke here and there perhaps ascending slowly into the cloudless sky; these, and sundry other accidental adjuncts,

make a distant city harmonize, as I have said, with the colors and beauties of NATURE in the surrounding scenery: place your city so near as to lose the effect of all these circumstances, your city will not be "so picturesque" to the eye, or so poetical to the imagination.

It is on this account, the line I quoted in the Letter to Campbell has so poetical an effect,

"Fuinum, et opes, strepitumque Romæ."

What an idea does the "*smoke and the noise*," give of the magnitude and multitude of a vast metropolis; but if the view had been *more distinct*, had all the buildings, as buildings, been brought nearer, the poetry of the city would be lost at once.

The very sounds of a great city, in like manner, become poetical, when blended into an indistinct murmur,

"And the busy *hum* of men." MILTON.

"For cities humming with a restless noise."

"Confusæ sonus urbis et illætabile murmur." VIRGIL.

If you come nearer, you may hear

—————"The stir  
Of the GREAT Babel, and the noise she makes,  
Through all her gates."

If you go nearer yet, you may enter with Crabbe into the alleys or lanes: the picture may be drawn with a faithful hand, and every thing set before us as it is: but the BEAUTY or SUBLIMITY in poetry is lost, and you of necessity approach to what is doubtless no less difficult to *execute*, the confines of the familiar. And so much in general of cities as poetical objects.

But Lord Byron brings us from Venice, not only to the magnificent ruins, but the very Cloaca of Rome.

Even here I shall follow you. Who will think "this work of labor as poetical as Richmond Hill, I know not:" that it may be made poetical, we have the authority of Dyer.

"Such the sewers large,  
Whither the great Tarquinean Genius dooms  
Each wave impure; and proud with *added rains*,  
*Hark!* how the MIGHTY *billows* LASH their vaults,  
And thunder; how they heave their rocks in vain!  
Though now incessant time has roll'd around,  
A THOUSAND WINTERS o'er the CHANGEFUL world,  
And yet a thousand since, the indignant floods  
ROAR LOUD, in their firm bounds, and dash and swell  
In vain."

I need not point out where the *poetry* lies; and the reader will observe, there is as little about *Art*, even in this description, as there was in Campbell's ship.

## APOLLO, GLADIATOR, HERCULES, &amp;c.

Which way shall we now turn; for lo! not the hog's tail in a high wind, but all your gods and goddesses, Apollo, Hercules, &c. brought against me and poor Nature!

What an assemblage! We almost shrink at the entrance. "The Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Apollo, the Laocoon, the Venus de Medicis, the Hercules, the GLADIATOR," (I shall omit Moses,) and all the HIGHER works of Canova, (why *higher works*, as Hercules' club, if it were equal in EXECUTION—do I understand your Lordship?—would be as fine a piece of art as Hercules;) but these great works of MAN are as poetical as Mount Etna, and still more so as "DIRECT MANIFESTATIONS OF MIND," &c.

I do not think so; but whether they are or are not as *poetical* as Mount Etna, &c. I can bring "*manifestations of mind*" against them, manifestations of the ALMIGHTY MIND, as I have before said. Why, if Jupiter himself was in your Pantheon, he would fall instantly before the thunder and lightning of the Jupiter in Virgil,

"Ipse Pater, MEDIA NIMBORUM IN NOCTE, CORUSCA  
Fulmina molitur dextra:" &c.

Why is this Jupiter, as poetry, superior to any marble Jupiter in the world? because no marble can imitate that which forms *the most* sublime and poetical part of the picture;

"MEDIA NIMBORUM IN NOCTE."

As we are playing at "*Bowls*," my Lord, I think I can upset your marble gods; for if I bowl down one, all the rest, upon the same principle, will fall about us, like ninepins. I will call in no *supernatural* assistance,

"Nec deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus."

I will take the Dying Gladiator, though it seems rather ungenerous to attack any one after he is *down*. But as this is the most consummate specimen of ART, I shall examine your exquisite delineation in poetry of the same statue.

I have done this in my Vindication against the Quarterly. I must examine your copy again, and more minutely.

Here, my Lord, follows your copy, but we must remember we are not speaking of the *statue* of the gladiator merely as a work of Art, but enquiring which is the *most* poetical, the statue itself, or your copy?—

"I see before me the Gladiator lie:  
He leans upon his hand his manly brow;  
Consents to death, but conquers agony,  
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low:  
And from his side *the last drops, ebbing slow,*



*From the sad gash, fall heavy, one by one,  
Like the first drops of a thunder shower; and now  
The arena swims around him—He is gone,  
Ere ceas'd the inhuman sound which hail'd the wretch who won.  
He heard it, but he heeded not. His eyes  
Were with his heart, and that was far away:  
He reck'd not of the life he lost, nor prize;  
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,  
There were his young barbarians all at play,  
There was their Dacian mother. He, their sire,  
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday!  
All this rush'd with his blood. Shall he expire,  
And unaveng'd? Arises, ye Goths, and glut your ire!"*

Let us examine these lines, by the statue before us.

I look at the marble; I see you have faithfully exhibited the "Dying Gladiator,"

"Leaning upon his hand, his manly brow  
Consenting to death, but conqu'ring agony."

A fine idea, which the statue excites in the beholder, and which you have so powerfully expressed! I see also, in your exquisite copy, that the

"Droop'd head sinks *gradually* low."

Following the idea excited, it may be so represented in poetry. The *sad drops* in the "statue" may seem to FALL, HEAVY, ONE BY ONE, and thus you may describe the act of "falling heavy, ONE BY ONE;" but when you add, like the *first drops of a thunder-storm*, you leave the statue as a work, and take the finest part of your *poetical* representation FROM NATURE. Thus you make it instantly *more* poetical, or else you need not have brought in this beautiful comparison, which is as remote *from Art*, as *thunder* is from a marble man.

You have made the marble drop blood, with drops that fall *heavy*, and in doing so, you paint from Nature, not the statue. But what are the most affecting images? Following Nature, you make the marble think, as well as drop blood. We instantly feel his increase of agony, as the dying Gladiator in his last hour thinks on his distant home, the banks of the Danube, his children at play; their Dacian mother, and himself, "butchered to make a Roman holiday!" From whence are all these affecting images—FROM NATURE? these tender recollections? from NATURE; and why introduced? to make the statue *more poetical*.

If you say the dumb marble excited all these affecting images in the mind of you, gazing on it with the feelings of a poet, from whence are these pictures and images taken? Who does not answer, from NATURE?

I shall now leave your Deities, and Statues, &c.; for if

what is here said be true in *one* example, it must be so in all.<sup>1</sup>

The same results will follow, and for the same reason; because "images taken from what is *SUBLIME* or beautiful in Nature," are *more* beautiful and sublime, and therefore *more poetical*, "than any images drawn purely from Art." "*Quod erat demonstrandum*;" and, let me add, my Lord, "*ex ore tuo*," from your own poetry, opposed to your *own criticisms*.

I think it best to divide the subject, for more clearness, into two parts; and I cannot better end this part than with the battle against your principal deities;—and I remain, my Lord,

&c. &c. &c.

## LETTER II.

### Mrs. UNWIN'S NEEDLE.

MY LORD,

THE transition from all the Gods of Art to this humble instrument is rather abrupt; but it is important, although you have included it *in the note*, because we now leave mere works of Art for passions; and Mrs. Unwin's needle alone, in my opinion, is as much superior to all your Gods, *poetically* considered, as it is to Cowper's "*sylvan sampler*." The affecting beauty of this image does not depend in the least upon being a needle, *quoad* needle, but upon being *that needle*, which, like the horn-box of Sterne, sets all the interesting circumstances connected with the sacred remembrance of the dead, and the bereaved friend, before us.

Does your Lordship think a spoon, *per se*, poetical? Probably not. Yet when the companions of the brave and unfortunate Cook, so long separated from their country, and in the wildest regions, thousands of leagues from their native land, accidentally saw a spoon, with the name of London on it; their distant country, and their tenderest connections, from whom they had been separated so long, and whom they might never see again, were more strongly recalled to their recollection; and this spoon, like Mrs. Unwin's needle, thus becomes *poetical*, not because it is a spoon, but because, under the peculiar circumstances with which it is presented to the

<sup>1</sup> The reader may compare with the statue of the Laocoon, the description in VIRGIL.

imagination, it wakes the tenderest and most affectionate feelings of our NATURE.

But we had better be a little more particular concerning this one circumstance. Mrs. Unwin's *needle* is, indeed, submitted to my judgment, with a kind of especial emphasis. "I submit to Mr. Bowles's own judgment a passage from another poem of Cowper's, to be compared with the same writer's '*sylvan sampler*.'" I will let the "*sylvan sampler*" alone at present; it shall be all "twaddle;" but the comparison is not fair. You take pure description, and compare it with poetry that affects the heart and passions. I say a tree, *any tree*, is, *per se*, *quoad tree*, *more poetical* than any *needle*, *quoad needle*, or *quoad needle* and "stockings," which is your Lordship's association.

"I submit to Mr. Bowles's *own* judgment!" A subject so respectfully submitted requires deliberation; and after deliberation, "I submit" the following observations to Lord Byron's *own* judgment! But first referring me to the stanza, he asks, if these *three* lines are not worth all the "boasted twaddling" about trees, so triumphantly re-quoted. I answer, Yes, yes, yes: worth *ten thousand* trees, merely as trees, visible trees, connected with no passions of the heart. But, after showing that you feel the affecting beauty of the *needles* as much as I do, you add, "a homely collection of images and ideas, associated with the *darning of stockings*, the *hemming of shirts*, and *mending of breeches*; and will any one deny they are eminently poetical, and beautiful, and pathetic, as addressed by Cowper to his nurse?" No, my Lord: no one will deny, and I *the last*, I hope, that they are eminently poetical and beautiful. But what I marvel at is this, that this image should be so touching and affecting to your Lordship, with your specific associations, *darning of stockings*! *hemming of shirts*! and *mending of breeches*! Why, I could not extract the passage without *laughing* to myself, though I never read the stanzas of poor Cowper without tears in my eyes. I do marvel, that with these associations in your Lordship's mind, of *shirt*, *stockings*, and *BREECHES*! the image should seem affecting to your Lordship at all. In my mind, it is poetically associated neither with one, nor all, nor any, of these auxiliaries that Art has brought in *versus Nature*, as particularly considered; the thought of one or the other never entered into my head. The needles were associated in my ideas with the loss of a beloved companion, never to be seen more upon earth, and Cowper's solitary and desolate heart, when he beheld the humblest relic of her domestic cares.

These thoughts, my Lord, give the needles interest; and affecting as these lines have ever been, and will be, to all lovers of poetry and NATURE, I do not think it worth while to take notice of Sheridan's pleasant story of the poulterer.

Let us see the effect of your Lordship's interesting and affecting associations with Mrs. Unwin's needles. Cowper's lines are,

"Thy NEEDLES, once a shining store,  
For my sake restless, heretofore,  
Now rust disused, and shine no more,

MY MARY.

"My 'STOCKINGS,' oh, departed friend!  
My 'SHIRT,' that I so oft did read,  
'BREECHES,' that I no more shall mend,

MY MARY!"

The "true critic" will not fail to remark how much pathos and poetry is added to the "shirt," as making it at the same time more characteristic of a poetical wearer, by being "rent."

To return. After your Lordship's triumphant sally against nature, armed with Mrs. Unwin's needle, in one hand, and Cowper's "stockings" and "breeches" in the other, you seem scarce able to restrain your expressions of triumph, for thus, my Lord, flows the tenor of your exulting prose:

"One more poetical instance of the power of ART, and even its superiority, over NATURE, in poetry, and I HAVE DONE."

And now behold

### THE BUST OF ANTINOUS.

"The bust of ANTINOUS," in your Lordship's animated language, is "not natural, but super-natural, or rather super-artificial!" As a work of ART, of statuary, this head I conceive to be, if I may judge from rude copies, most perfect. But poetry and statuary are two things, as poetry and painting are; and therefore, though nothing in the whole world of art may exceed this head in marble, I would only beg your Lordship to endeavour to describe it in poetry. We are speaking of poetry, and not of statuary as an art; and with such enthusiasm, if you cannot describe it, I know no one who can. When you have put it into verse, I will examine it, and see how far your Lordship will, *per force*, be obliged to have recourse to *her*, by whose aid your poetry shines, as much as your criticism ungratefully decries her. You say, "the poetry in this bust is in no respect derived from nature! It must be difficult to say what the poetry of the bust is derived from, for it is not natural, but supernatural, or rather SUPER-ARTIFICIAL!"—Byron.

As I am not one of the initiated in these mysteries, but only pretend to be a man of common sense, this is all to me, I confess, as mystic as "Muggle-tonian" dreams, or rather, might I venture to say, like "*super-artificial twaddle!*"

"*Is there any thing in nature like this bust, except the Venus?*" That is, is there any thing in nature like this bust, except the Venus, which is NOT in nature? Do I understand it? Let the reader try.

"Is there any thing in nature like this marble, except the VENUS? Can there be more poetry gathered into existence than in that wonderful creation of perfect beauty? But the poetry of this bust is in no degree derived from nature. The execution is *not* natural, it is *super-natural*, and *super-artificial*." BYRON. I know that every thing in ART must be ideal nature, possible nature, beyond common, existing, every-day nature. But the great prototype of the most beautiful "*supernatural*," "*super-artificial*" art, must be NATURE! The most perfect bust must have eyes, lips, forehead, hair, nose, &c. &c. Yes: but nature never produced any thing so perfect as this bust, in this respect!" It is of no great consequence, in my opinion, whether this be literally true or not. But your Lordship is a little hard upon nature. You are yet a young man, and in the course of your travels have seen a lady of rank, and I, though not such an *elegans formarum spectator* as your Lordship, who have also had the pleasure of being once in her company, admit all you say. Yes, you, my Lord, in a small space of life, and, compared with the time that has passed since man was first created, but as a wink, you have seen, a British Lady, and an Albanian girl, nearly, if not quite, as perfect, with respect to form, features, countenance, &c. as the Venus. You must have been most singularly fortunate; yet, in your *circumscription of the powers of nature*, you tell us "nature never produced a living face like this, or the bust of "Antinous." How do you know? But I do not care whether nature has or has not. Poetry has; and I will place Milton's Adam and Eve, as perfect in form, in "*supernatural*," or in "*super-artificial*" beauty, as the bust of Antinous, or the statue of Venus!

When I reflect on the ardor of your language, (granting this bust to be that of woman, and made complete, as a whole "*supernatural, super-artificial female*,") there might almost be a fear that your Lordship's love would resemble at last that of Pygmalion; but there would be no danger, for the moment your "*supernatural, super-artificial*" beauty was *alive*, your "*super-artificial*" transport would be over! The whole of what you say on this point appears so strange to a man of

plain understanding, that I think I must have misconceived your meaning. If I have done so, I shall be sorry; if I do understand it, I have no hesitation to use your own words, "away with such cant!" such "*supernatural and super-artificial twaddle!*" I here put aside this bust, as I have already made an attack upon your full assemblage of marble gods, the mighty machinery of your criticism.

I have said that statuary and poetry are two things. Statuary, as an *art*, is indebted to nature for only one thing, with which, indeed, she performs *her wonders*; turning a rude block into such a creature, *sui generis*, as now adorns the dining-room of Lansdown House, so beautiful, so perfectly beautiful, that I, Goth as I may seem to your Lordship, when I have the honor of being admitted as a guest, have sometimes forgot my soup to gaze. Art, then, is indebted to nature for nothing but the block; but for what is the statuary indebted to nature? for *all his ideas*. For though he might have been less fortunate than your Lordship, who have *accidentally* met in your travels so near a resemblance to Venus, as the Albanian girl, yet he could have had no *ideas at all* of beauty, except from nature; for if there had not been a beautiful human figure, and "*thinking things*," my Lord, like you and me, upon earth, had *other forms*, neither of us could have had the least idea of that beauty, the conception of which is first required in the sculptor. But let the art and artist have done all they can, they cannot render their image as perfect as poetry can; for she can give to the statue life, animation, tears, smiles, language, eyes that shine, &c.; and for these ideas poetry is indebted to NATURE.

The bust of Antinous, which seems even superior to all your other vanquished gods, to Mrs. Unwin's needles themselves, I fear, also, must fall, like "Friar Bacon's HEAD!"

But as you have joined with this bust the "Poulterer's shop," and Cowper's "sylvan sampler" of *trees*, by way of saving time, I shall here say a word or two of poetical trees. Your Lordship does not seem to admire "trees." However, let us only remark that even Constantinople would be less poetical without them, and by putting them here together, the city and trees, I think I shall be able, not only to save time, but to "*kill two birds with one stone.*"

#### PORT OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

I have no doubt, from what I have read, the view you speak of is unique in picturesque and poetical beauty. But, my Lord, are there indeed no trees among the buildings? No

golden cupolas shining to the morn? Much as your Lordship dislikes "sylvan samplers," are there no beautiful palms, sleeping, as it were, in the sunshine, like a beautiful Albanian girl? No dark cypresses breaking the white buildings? As to the sylvan part of the landscape, I shall ask permission to quote a line of my own.

..... "Sees

Damascus' golden fans, and minarets, and TREES."

I put the "*trees*" into the picture, my Lord, not for the sake of rhyme, which sometimes more sublime poets do; (and your Lordship well knows that rhyme

"The rudder is of verses,

By which, like ships, they steer their courses:"

HUDIBRAS:)

but I assure you I put in these "odious trees," not for the sake of the rhyme, but to break the monotony of buildings, and to make them more poetical; and I doubt how *poetical* even Constantinople would look without them; and to shew this, not being a great traveller, but having seen the sea, not "only in a picture," as your Lordship seems to think, but, in reality, I must take you from Constantinople, and the Hellespont, to that part of the sea with which I am most familiar, Southampton Water. The banks are hung almost entirely with wood, as far as the eye can reach.

"And forests sweep the margin of the main."

Now suppose the whole line was houses, would it be so poetical? I THINK NOT!

"And *chimnies* sweep the margin of the main."

If you say, the buildings, interspersed, add to the poetical effect of the *trees*, as well as the trees to them, I answer, "Doubtless!" But the test is this: which would be most poetical—a beautiful building without trees, or trees without buildings, on the sea-side? The bust, and the trees, have led me a little out of my way, for I intended to have connected "The Needle" with

#### HOMER'S SPEAR, WARRIORS, ARMS, HELMETS, BOWS, &c.

"The shield of Achilles derives its poetical interest from the subjects described on it."—*Bowles*.

'And from what does the *spear* of Achilles derive its interest? and the helmet and the mail worn by Patroclus, and the celestial armour, and the very brazen greaves, of the well-booted Greeks?'—*Byron*.

And now, if Mrs. Unwin's needle and stockings will not

much serve your Lordship, let us see what can be effected on your side as the champion of art *versus* NATURAM, by the "spear" of Achilles.

But why did you take the *spear*, my Lord? What can the "spear" do, if the "shield" could do nothing? The helmet, of which you find Campbell has made so poetical an use in O'Connor's Child, would have done better; but not to quail under the spear of Achilles, even in the hands of Lord Byron, I ask you first, if the spear be poetical, is it *more poetical* than the warrior who uses it? The shield in Homer, and the pastoral cup in Theocritus, are described at large. These great poets were obliged to have recourse to images from NATURE to *sustain* the poetical interest of a work of art. But describe distinctly a spear. It is long, it is short, or, perhaps, *bloody*. Let us take the first arms that occur in Homer, not of Achilles, but of a secondary warrior.<sup>1</sup>

Let us remark Diomed, putting on his warlike habiliments. Now observe, for it is a matter of mere observation, how Homer, by images drawn from NATURE, in connection with ideas of terror or sublimity, makes us forget the work of art, and rouses the attention; these are some of the animating adjuncts that make the picture *MORE* poetical.

The first thing that presents itself is the *helmet*.

"High on his helm CELESTIAL LIGHTNINGS PLAY!  
His beamy shield emits a living ray;—  
Like the RED STAR that FIRES TH' AUTUMNAL SKIES,  
WHEN FRESH HE BEARS HIS RADIANT ORB TO SIGHT,  
AND BATH'D IN OCEAN, SHOOTS A KEENER LIGHT."

Pope's Homer.

I have extracted these remarks from a few observations, written long before your criticism; there is none of your examples, my Lord, which I have not before attentively considered; and I must think, you have not so attentively considered them as myself.

I hope this will be sufficient to show, that I do not wish Ulysses to use, as in the *travestie*, his "mutton-fist" instead of his bow.

But suppose you had brought against me Hector himself, κορυθαίολος Hector! Examine the most interesting circumstance in the whole Iliad, where THE HELMET becomes most interesting: Need I mention the parting between Hector and Andromache? Every heart has been smitten with the

<sup>1</sup> I have spoken at large on this subject in the last vindication, where I mentioned the images from art introduced in the *Paradise Lost*. Achilles' spear is an ash from Mount Pelion, as Satan's spear was like a mast "hewn in Norwegian forest."



affectionate incidents of the passage, since Homer existed. The child is in the mother's arms; and as Hector, going to battle, is about to kiss it, the child is frightened at the plumes, and turns his head into his mother's bosom; Hector takes his helmet off, and then kisses the child, who, *εκλινθη ιαχων*, whilst the mother smiles in her tears; and I ask, which does your Lordship think the *most poetical*, the affectionate father, the *neatly smiling* mother, the child that shrinks, or THE HELMET? I know what you will say in your heart, if you are indeed a "magnanimous" enough, whilst you will admit the truth of what I have said.

As I think I have taken your city of Venice, Constantinople, &c. "played at Bowls," not, I hope, without success, among your marble gods, and even supported my case against you, whether armed with the glittering spear of Achilles, or brandishing Mrs. Unwin's needle, I consider the battle nearly won. I shall dispatch some of the most material of the other arguments as shortly as I can.

Your Lordship brings the sublime image before us, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bourah." I think I must object to the dyed garments from Bourah!! Had they been *specified* as a work of art, I should; but who thinks of the garments, when nothing is specified, and when the eye and mind are fixed on the terrible and advancing spectacle?

As to garments, now your Lordship has taken me to the scriptures, let me ask what is more sublime than this passage; "the battle of every warrior is with confused noise, and WITH GARMENTS ROLLED IN BLOOD!" You have also omitted, in the passage you have quoted, a circumstance which gives an indistinct glory even to the garments. "He that is GLORIOUS in his apparel, travelling in the GREATNESS of his strength."

I do not like to touch this awful and sublime passage, but must only desire your Lordship to consider what would be the effect of a garment from artificial life, a "real coat" for instance.

From the "dyed garments," which do not take off from the grandeur of the image the least, because they are not *specified*, let us pass to Cæsar's mantle, and the dagger that destroyed him, for we are now speaking of the works of ART in poetry.

I do not object, nor ever should object, nor is there any thing in the principles I have laid down which should make me object, to the "dagger," or the "mantle." The dagger is connected with ideas of terror, and is, *per se*, in some degree poetical; but a "*knife*" is not; and therefore, though I

do not object to the "dagger," I object very much to the "knife," when Lady Macbeth says,

"Pall me in the deepest shroud of night,  
That my keen *knife* see not the wound it makes."

I object as much to "blanket," which renders the sublimest passage in the world ludicrous.

"Nor heav'n *peep* through the *blanket* of the dark!"

This I object to; and I object somewhat, not to the "dagger," or the "mantle," which are introduced, but to "peep through;" and I object, for the same reason, to

"See what a *rent* the envious CASCA made."

But so far from objecting to the mantle, when Antony says,

"You all do know *this mantle*,"

I think it *most affecting*; and how much more affecting is it rendered by the magic touch of Shakspeare, when, in continuation, Antony (how could you, a poet, omit these exquisite lines?) brings to the recollection of Cæsar's friends a particular and beautiful circumstance from nature; whilst the orator *affects* their *hearts* by the *distinct* image of the summer evening, and the very tent, connected with ideas of Cæsar's glory, and victorious arms.

"You all do know this mantle! I remember  
The FIRST TIME CÆSAR ever put it on:  
'Twas on a SUMMER'S EVENING, in his TENT,  
THE DAY he OVERCAME the NERVII!"

Any thing more beautiful as poetry, or more effective as oratory, designed to rouse the feelings, cannot be imagined.

Thus you see, my Lord, I can turn Shakspeare against you, as well as Milton against Campbell, and gain strength from your own quotations. Who that feels the circumstances I have mentioned thinks of the *garment* of Cæsar merely as a garment? It is the poetical sentiment, and the poetical imagery from NATURE, that fills the mind. But the case had been different, if the mantle had been too distinctly brought in sight.

I will illustrate this by a trifling circumstance. You recollect the passage,

"Life is a walking shadow, &c.  
Out, out, BRIEF CANDLE."

*Shakspeare.*

The passage is quoted in an edition of the Tatler, as follows,

<sup>1</sup> The poetry of the "dagger" depends entirely upon its associating images. The dagger in Macbeth is sublime; in the Old Song it is ludicrous; because,

"When it had kill'd a *Cheshire man*,  
'Twould *toast* a CHESHIRE cheese."

"Life is a walking shadow ; a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more.  
Out, out, *short candle* !"

Now every one feels this absurdity ; and yet brief is short, and short is *brief*. Why has it so ludicrous an effect ? Because, when the word "*brief*" is used, the mind is fixed *only upon the sentiment* ; when "*short*" is used, it is fixed only on the CANDLE !

If these observations are just, and I believe they will generally be found so, nothing more need be said of daggers, arms, shields, spears, &c. ; or the bow of Ulysses.

The human *hand* may be poetical or not, as it is described. But a *fist* doubled up as in the act of committing an assault, complaint of which comes before a country justice, is not poetical ; and I am afraid, my Lord, all you have said of "*fists*," and "*fighting*," and "*gouging*," must go for nothing.

"It grieves me much, replied the Clerk again,  
Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain !"

I cannot put aside the bow of Ulysses without one more remark. I have spoken before of the affecting circumstance of Penelope weeping over the bow of her long-lost husband. Do you think that the effect would have been the same, if she had wept over his *wig*, provided he ever wore one ?

Mrs. Unwin's "*needles*" were dangerous, and would have failed in any hands but Cowper's ; and him you pronounce "*no poet* !" This is an *avtos ephen*, which I could not have expected. He failed in Homer completely ; but your assertion can only be met by another. He was a great, a sublime, an affecting, and, what is more, a truly ethical and religious poet, my Lord. But he lessened the effect of passages of the utmost sublimity of thought and language, by transitions to the familiar and to the artificial. Who can bear,

"Who loves an hot-house, loves a green-house too ;"

because hot-houses and green-houses are not so poetical as "*green-fields*." And when you describe me as having "*a heart of gall*" for endeavoring to appreciate ("*not depreciate*") Pope, as a poet and a man, consider, my Lord, whether he be quite consistent, who talks of poetry without feeling Cowper's ; who talks of ethics, without venerating him ; and who severely judges him as guilty of a crime, the effect of that awful CALAMITY, with which it pleased the Almighty to afflict him !

But to return, for a last grapple with

## ACHILLES' SPEAR.

Achilles' spear is the only part of his armour that is unworthy of him; and this you select, instead of the emblazoned shield, so distinctly marked as a finished piece of art. Homer seemed to have paid so much attention to the other part of his favorite hero's armour, that he scarcely says any thing of this. But even this, my Lord, I can turn against you, as I did Satan's spear against Campbell. All that is said of this spear is, that it is paternal, and was cut from the mountain Pelion. What signifies where it was cut? you might say! So, when you observe there was no occasion for the "Norwegian pine," when you liked the "ammiral's" mast, with which to compare Satan's spear, better, I withdraw from the contest, and leave your Lordship to battle with Homer and Milton as to the propriety of any poetical addition to their similes. If the "grey-haired loon" did not skip from the staff, he remains equally sturdy against the "spear of Achilles."

What I have said of the armour of Diomed and others in Homer, may be said of that of Achilles; and without expecting a *coadjutor* in Pope, I looked at the note on the passage, and found these words: "There is wonderful pomp in the description of Achilles arming himself, &c. &c. He is at first likened to the moonlight, then to the flames of a beacon, then to a comet, and lastly to the sun himself!"

Your Lordship thinks the execution of a poem *all!* This I deny; and affirm, that, *comparatis comparandis*, if an epic poem evince as consummate execution as a smaller poem, he who composes an epic poem, with this consummate execution, will be a greater poet, in every sense of the word, than he who evinces the utmost and most consummate skill on an inferior and less poetical subject. And I need not hesitate to affirm this, for it is the opinion of all critics, from Aristotle to Dr. Johnson.

As to Petrarch being equal, or reckoned, in Italy, superior, to Dante, it may be the consequence of some peculiar attachment of the Italians to the name of Petrarch; but of this they could never persuade me, though fulminated *ex cathedra* by all the Popes that Italy ever produced. And I may safely appeal to the universal opinion, not only of professed critics, but of all men of general common intelligence.

One word more will end all I have to say at present on

! What! is the conception of such a poem as the *Paradise Lost* nothing?

another subject,—the moral character of POPE. If it was not from want of “money,” &c. that I wrote his life, and published an edition of his works, there is another circumstance that might have prevailed with me in giving my opinions, namely, a conscientious conviction of the truth of what I advanced; and what is biography, if failings are not to be mentioned? As to his “ethics,” the poet, I admit, profanes the dignity of his high art, who does not apply the gifts he possesses to the furtherance of TRUTH and of VIRTUE. But I contend, that one epistle of ELOISA will counteract *ten thousand* of POPE’s *ethical* epistles; and I wish your Lordship to look at that glorious passage in MILTON’S prose works, where he speaks of meditating some immortal strain, and you will confess, that so far from thinking he was telling “lies,” his object was high and holy praise to that Being, to whom he owed the power of praising him.

Whether it was wise to say all I did of POPE, I cannot tell. I spoke as I *sincerely* believed; that it was not *wise* to speak with *candor*, I have found to my cost.

#### FALCONER’S SHIPWRECK, DESERT, HOUNSLOW HEATH.

What has been said, I conceive, will be sufficient to enable the commonest reader to see the weakness or irrelevancy of all your arguments. In looking back, I shall only notice shortly a few I have omitted. You have spoken of the poetical effect of terms of *art* in FALCONER’S Shipwreck. Nothing can have a greater effect than many, in bringing us as it were into the ship, and enabling us to see every action of the men employed in the hour of horror. Nothing can be more beautiful than the description “*of weighing anchor;*” the description of the stately Britannia, and her riding on

“The pride and glory of the *Ægean* main.”

The other parts of the landscape are purposely kept out of sight, that every eye and every heart may be fixed on this beautiful object, as she streams on the sight, departing for ever.

But when you speak of the poetry of the tackle, bunt-line, clue lines, &c. do you really think these as poetical as the description of the tempestuous scene of darkness and distress itself? Do you think that when the ship is in the hollow of one of those enormous waves; when

“In that horrid vale,

She hears no more the roaring of the gale;”

do you think this awful and novel image is not *ten thousand* times more poetical than such lines as,

"For he who seeks the tempest to disarm,  
Must never first enbrail a lee yard-arm?"

Or,

"Taught aft the sheet, they tally and belay?"

Your cannon itself, my Lord, has smoke and noise, but does no execution. I have spoken of this in my last pamphlet, on the subject of the "devilish artillery" in Milton. Your criticism, on this point, is sensible and judicious; but of your own cannon we cannot say, as one of the leaders did,

"The TERMS we sent were TERMS of WEIGHT!"

Much as I have said about the poetical effect of ships on their element, and although I have quoted your own striking description before, I cannot resist recalling to the reader's attention the animated picture of this kind from the publication before me:

"The aspect of a storm in the Archipelago is as poetical as need be, the sea being particularly short, dashing, and dangerous, and the navigation intricate and broken by the isles and currents. Cape Sigceum, the tumuli of the Troad, Lemnos, Tenedos, all added to the associations of the time. But what seemed the most '*poetical*' of all at the moment, were the numbers (about two hundred) of Greek and Turkish craft, which were obliged to 'cut and run' before the wind, from their unsafe anchorage, some for Tenedos, some for other isles, some for the main, and some it might be for eternity. The sight of these little scudding vessels, darting over the foam in the twilight, now appearing and now disappearing between the waves in the cloud of night, with their peculiarly *white* sails, (the Levant sails not being of "*coarse canvas*," but of white cotton,) skimming along as quickly, but less safely, than the sea-mews which hovered over them; their evident distress, their reduction to fluttering specks in the distance, their crowded succession, their *littleness*, as contending with the giant element, which made our stout forty-four's *teak* timbers (she was built in India) creak again; their aspect and their motion, all struck me as something far more '*poetical*' than the mere broad, brawling, shipless sea, and the sullen winds, could possibly have been without them."

This is a beautiful picture indeed; but the extraordinary circumstance is, that if I could have painted it, I could not have brought any thing in the world so much in favour of the principles of poetry I advocate, and AGAINST yourself. I will mention a few circumstances.

"The sight of these little *scudding* vessels, *darting* over the *foam*, in the *TWILIGHT*, now *appearing* and now *disappearing* between the waves in the cloud of night, with their peculiarly

and ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~which~~ ~~hovered~~ ~~over~~ ~~them~~; their evident dis-  
~~position~~ ~~their~~ ~~reduction~~ ~~to~~ ~~fluttering~~ ~~specks~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~distance~~, their  
~~clouded~~ ~~succession~~, their *littleness*, as contending with the  
~~great~~ ~~element~~!!"

Thank you, my Lord! Any one who casts his eye over the  
words I have marked, will see how much of NATURE, and  
how little of ART, appears in the poetry of this animated de-  
scription; and I conclude this observation by turning the most  
richly coloured passage in your publication, my Lord, AGAINST  
yourself.

Whether the mere *brawling, shipless sea*, and the *sullen*  
winds, (as your Lordship, with the skill of a rhetorician, not  
as a reasoner, calls them,) could be as poetical without the  
vessels, I say not; but, when thus seen, and thus set before  
us, I fearlessly repeat, that to those winds, to that element so  
gigantic, against which their "littleness" contended, we owe  
the most picturesque and poetical part of the beauty of this  
passage.

I have observed, "that your own poetry laughed "at"  
your "*variable*" principles of criticism, and so animated were  
you in this description, that you must have utterly forgotten,  
whilst you wrote it, *its tendency*, which is to establish the  
"INVARIABLE" principles of NATURE, confirmed by yourself,  
on the very element with which you are so familiar.

"Take away the 'pyramids,' and what is the 'desert?'  
Take away Stonehenge from Salisbury plain, and it is nothing  
more than Hounslow Heath, or any other uninclosed down."  
—*Byron*.

I will tell you, my Lord, why a desert is poetical without  
a pyramid: because it conveys ideas of immeasurable extent,  
of profound silence, of solitude. What is Salisbury Plain  
without Stonehenge? Stonehenge is poetical from its tradi-  
tions, and uncertain origin. (See Warton's fine sonnet.)  
But Hounslow Heath conveys to the mind chiefly ideas of  
"artificial" life,—turnpike-roads, stage-coaches in all direc-  
tions, raree-showmen, whose shows "thousands" would look  
at, who do not look at the sun!! carts and caravans, and  
butcher boys scampering on horseback with one spur, and  
my Lord in his coach, with the "poetical LIVERYMEN" be-  
hind!

Therefore, HOUNSLOW HEATH is not so poetical as "the  
Desert," connected with the idea of solitude, of extent, of  
sands moving in the vast wilderness; of Arabs telling their  
wild stories by moonlight, &c.:—these make the "desert"

more poetical than Hounslow Heath, with or without a pyramid.

But we must be more particular, now we are come to

### SALISBURY PLAIN.

We have been taking a delightful excursion, from Venice to Constantinople, from Athens and the shore of Greece to the deserts and the Pyramids of Egypt, as on ROGERO's horse, from the pyramids and deserts of Egypt, having placed me,

"Ut magnus, modo Thebis, modo ATHENIS,"

you have brought me back safely to Salisbury Plain, within thirty miles of my own door.

And here it is almost time (for which I am sorry) to part, for the excursion has been pleasant; and if we have not quite agreed on the road, I hope we shall part in as good humour as we met. But before I take my leave, suffer me to recall to your recollection the first words of your sentence about the pyramids.

The reader has seen, that you have admitted they are not so poetical without the desert and its associations as with them. Now I have quoted my original positions *four or five times*, placed them before Mr. Campbell, the Quarterly Review, and your Lordship, and I beg and entreat you again to remember, I never said that WORKS OF ART were *not poetical*, (I must have been an idiot so to have said,) I only said the sublime and beautiful works of NATURE were, *per se, abstractedly*, MORE SO! Has the AIR of Italy, Milan, &c. affected your Lordship's recollection? "Works of nature are, *per se*, in what is beautiful or sublime, *more poetical* than any works of art."

"PASSIONS are *more poetical* than the manners and habits of artificial life."

If you had read what I distinctly laid down, or, having read the first propositions, remembered them, your book would not have been so pleasant, but I cannot concede that any instance you have advanced, has affected my original positions.

Your gods and goddesses; your statues, busts, temples; your arms, shields, and spears, (not forgetting Mrs. Unwin's *needle* and Cowper's *small-clothes*;) your prospects of cities by sea, Venice, Constantinople, &c.; your pyramids and pigsties; your slop-basins and "*other vessels*;" your liveryman; the desert, Hounslow Heath, (why not Bagshot? it is most poetical of the two,) Salisbury Plain, the poulterer, the rab-



bats, "white, black, and grey," vanish at the waving of the wand of truth; and the grotesque assembly becomes

"Like the baseless shadow of a vision."

However, as we are got safe upon Salisbury Plain at last, it is time to make my bow; and I can assure you, my Lord, I look back on many of the beautiful pictures you have painted with unfeigned delight, though still thinking my principles of poetical criticism not a jot the less "INVARIABLE," in consequence of any arguments you have brought against them.

About to take my leave on this ground, rendered far more POETICAL than Hounslow Heath, not only by Stonehenge and the tumuli of ancient Britons, those obscure records which my friend Sir R. Hoar has so ably illustrated, but the immense rampart of Wans Dyke; I hope I have not infringed that honorable and manly courtesy which is due to a person of your Lordship's genius and talents, although they have shone so unpropitiously to myself. I have said, I do not wish to flatter you, so I profess, my Lord, not to fear you; but, as your friend Hobhouse says, "a mouse will turn if he is trampled on." You are indeed distinguished as much as possible from my late assailants, the first of whom was disgusting from vulgarity; the arguments of the other were marked in an equal ratio by stupidity and sophistry;<sup>2</sup> and as "Salisbury Plain" is now before us, I might say in the peculiar phraseology of one of these brilliant writers, (as "SHAKSPEARE HAS IT!!")

An' if I had them on SARUM PLAIN,  
I'd drive them *cackling* home to CAMELOT!

There are one or two personal passages in your pamphlet, which it is possible, upon second thoughts, you would have omitted. Whether you would do so or not, I shall pass them over *sub silentio*; and hoping, in the course of this discussion, I may not have said a word to give the least personal offence to your Lordship,

I remain, &c. &c.

W. L. BOWLES.

<sup>1</sup> In his speech, April 16th, 1821.

<sup>2</sup> Reviewers in the London Magazine, and in the Quarterly. The whole account of the origin and progress of this controversy may be had at Warren's, Bookseller, Bond Street, entitled "A Vindication of the Editor of Pope's works, &c."

## POST SCRIPTUM.

---

I forgot to speak of a ship in a tempest as a poetical object; and this, probably, your Lordship may turn against me. A ship in a tempest undoubtedly is both sublime and terrible; but what makes it so? It is the intense sympathy with the terror and distress, that causes the sublimity: and do you sympathise with the people in the ship, or *the ship*? the men, or the *boards*? then your sympathy is derived from nature. If you knew a ship *had no men* in it, the terror, and those feelings which cause sublimity, would be lost. Let the ship appear in the tempest, and far greater sublimity and terror will, on this account, be given when she appears no longer.

Crabbe and Coleridge have both taken such a moment of terror, which gives an indiscrutable sublimity; because, an image from nature is called up, which shows you those miserable people in despair and agony one moment; in the next, the waves are only seen, the storm only heard, and the ship gone.

Coleridge's idea is that, at midnight, he beholds a ship tossing, by one flash of lightning; another comes, and

"He sees no vessel there."

Whilst we are on the subject, allow me again to advert to that singularly affecting poem, "*The Shipwreck*."

How does Falconer contrive to make the ship itself an object of sympathy? By personifying it, as endowed with sense:

"Now launching headlong down the horrid vale,  
She hears no more the roaring of the gale."

The cause of the want of interest in the scenes and classic places by which the ship is surrounded, arises only from double anxiety and sympathy with the mariners, and particularly those for whom we are so much interested.

Who at such a moment could bear to have his deep solicitude interrupted, by being called upon to contemplate even those shores, where

"Godlike SOCRATES and PLATO shone."—SHIPWRECK.

As the scene rises in terror, how fine is the introduction of the ANGEL of the WIND.

"And lo! tremendous o'er the deep he springs,  
The inflaming sulphur flashing from his wings;  
Hark! his strong voice the dismal silence breaks."

Is not this infinitely more poetical than

"Taught aft the sheet, they tally and belay?"

In some cases, where nautical terms are used, the effect, I admit, is very striking, in bringing you, as it were, into the midst of this forlorn and agonised crew. Such is the animated passage,

"'Square fore and aft the yards,' the Master calls:  
'You Timoneers her motion still attend,  
For on your steerage all our lives depend:  
So steady! meet her! watch the curving prow,  
And from the gale directly let her go!  
'Starboard again!' the watchful Pilot cries:  
'Starboard!' th' obedient Timoneer replies!"

Who can read this without fancying himself amidst the crew, and almost hearing the conflict of the elements, the words given and repeated,

"'Starboard again!' the watchful Pilot cries:  
'Starboard!' th' obedient Timoneer replies!"

But an image from artificial life puts to flight almost all sympathy.

"Fate spurs her on!"

A few more critical observations occur on looking over what your Lordship has advanced.

*Architecture*.—You observe that it is the architecture of Westminster Abbey that makes it poetical: the tower for "making patent shot," accordingly, would be equally *poetical* if the architecture was the same. I affirm this is not so. Westminster Abbey is, and must be, poetical, from moral associations more than from its architecture. "The *object*" cannot be seen without these associations, connected with time, and the illustrious dead.

I say your answer is that of a *painter*, not a poet! The architecture would make "the tower for patent shot" equally *picturesque*, as an object, for painting sees nothing but the surface, but it would not make it as *poetical*, except in mere description; and I defy your Lordship, and all the poets who ever existed, to make "the patent shot tower" poetical, let the architecture be what it will, unless they keep *all its uses* and *name* out of sight. In using the word "objects," of course I imply "poetical" objects, which include not only the visible form, but the associations. Nay, Sir Christopher Wren's additions to Westminster Abbey are not so poetical as the Abbey itself, though their "*architecture*" were as appropriate as it is inharmonious. I cannot show the absurdity of a

poetical tower for "patent shot," so well as by a plain instance—that of the "Old Minster" and the "Glass-houses" at Bristol! If a glass-house had the same architecture, to a painter it would appear the same; but try the effect in poetry. Chatterton, speaking of the spirit of *ÆLLA*, says,

"Whether—  
Or fiery round the *MINSTER* glare!"

Try the effect of the other building, supposing its *architecture* the same,

"Or fiery round the *Glass-house* glare!"

the whole passage becomes ludicrous.

*The Wall of Malamocco, Euxine, and Argo.*—When I speak of the sea, I do not speak of the Adriatic, or any part of it in particular. You take particular *spots*, and ask, whether, in that spot, the "*master*" that curbs the sea, be not more poetical than the sea? "*Curb the Adriatic!*" What must this strip of sea be to bear being "so curbed?" Its poetical *SUBLIMITY* must be entirely subdued, by Venice in one corner, and "*a wall*" in the other! Bring your "*walls*," my Lord, to "*curb*" *THE PACIFIC*! and you would do something! But the mighty Cordilleras, of *NATURE*, only can do that.

The "*Argo*" entering into the Euxine must have been, indeed, a most poetical object; and I can readily feel with the poet, standing on the spot from whence the spectacle might have been first seen, repeating the lines from the Greek tragedian. No ship had been there before! What reflections, fears, and awe, would that thought alone create! But I ask, is the interest, even here, derived from the ship as a *work of art*? It is in part derived, no doubt, from the idea of the courage, enterprise, and mastery of man over this great element, in part from the beauty added to the scene; but the novelty, the awe, and other complex ideas, excite the highest poetical enthusiasm, which I should partake with your Lordship, but should not think my principles of the sublime of Nature in the least affected by this instance. For, *abstractedly*, the Euxine is a *more sublime* object than the Argo; and if you admit associations, they must be derived from feelings of *NATURE*.

I find I have done your Lordship injustice in supposing the canal of Venice "*artificial*;" but the name alone is quite sufficient to destroy its poetical interest.

I think I have now examined almost all of your arguments.

The "*tall*" ship becomes "*diminished to a buoy*;"—the marble temples sink to dust, or, opposed even to the mountains of

America, appear as little as the Pyramids, scarcely seen at the bottom of the engraving called the "scale of mountains;"—Mrs. Unwin's needle renders not more service than that of Gammer Gurton, which was found in Hodge's "breeches!"—Antinous' bust becomes fragile as the brazen head of Friar Bacon;—and Homer's arms, that make such a glittering shew, impose only for a moment, like the coruscations of a fire-work, which seems to add, as it ascends, a thousand stars and glories to the night, and falls down a "*bit of burnt stick!*"

So, my Lord, the airy style, the pleasant stories, the delightful pictures, the brilliant imagery, of your publication, are as beautiful as they are baseless; because, on the least touch of argumentative examination, they are reduced to nothing,

"Cum ventum *ad veram* est sensus, NATURA repugnat."

I had almost forgot a line of Horace which you have quoted:

"O fons Banduciæ SPLENDIDIOR vitro."

This would have been something to your Lordship's purpose, if "the *glass*" had been made *more splendid* "than the *fountain*." How *perverse* must Horace have been, who so unfortunately for your Lordship's argument has described the *fountain* *more splendid* than the GLASS: "the glass" is as brittle as your Lordship's arguments. I will not say they are as *muddy* as the *fountain* is clear.

In return for "the hog and the high wind," which is introduced as a specimen of what your Lordship is pleased to call facetiously "MR. BOWLES' NATURE!" "bare Nature!" I might make a comparison between a toy which I have seen in the shops, and which might be called with as much justice a specimen of Lord Byron's ART! It is a wooden mastiff with ears and tail erect, half showing his teeth, as ready to bite at all that pass. It stands upon a foot-board, which when it is pressed between the finger and thumb utters a sound something like a mixture of the quack of a duck "in a high wind" and the bark of a dog. I am far from wishing to designate your Lordship's arguments by such an emblem, but it is, at least, as much like your Lordship's "ART," as the "HOG" and the "PIG-STIES" are like "MY NATURE!"

In fully, and I hope satisfactorily, developing my ideas on the subject of this controversy, I have thought it necessary to go into more minute detail, to prevent the possibility of future misrepresentation: having done this, and being convinced that misrepresentation must now be from design, I hope to drop for ever the controversial pen.

The "order" of classing the highest kind of poetry is not mine,

and, therefore, not *arbitrary*; "the order" is that admitted by all who ever thought or wrote on the subject.

Lord Byron's code is *arbitrary*, and not mine. As to the poet being ranked according to his "*execution and not the branch, of his art*," I have never considered the *branch* of the art as constituting a poet independent of the *execution*. I estimate a poet's character from both.

Though I hope to lay down, after what I have now said, my controversial pen, I do not give up the idea of publishing a volume on poetical criticism, illustrative of these remarks. If a single expression occur in the preceding pages contrary to the fairest mode of argument, it has not been intentional.

The public will decide between us; but one concluding observation must be made. Your Lordship has entertained us with a pleasant story of the "*doctor's*" HAT, alluding to my "*sensitiveness*" to criticism; therefore I devote what remains to the "chapter of the"

#### DOCTOR'S HAT.<sup>1</sup>

"Mr. Bowles's extreme sensibility reminds me of a circumstance which occurred on board of a frigate in which I was a passenger. The surgeon wore a *wig*. Upon this ornament he was extremely tenacious. One day a young lieutenant, in the course of a facetious discussion, said, 'Suppose now, doctor, I should take off your *hat*.' 'Sir,' replied the doctor, 'I shall talk no longer with you; you grow *scurrilous*.'"—Byron.

Allow me only to say, that for thirty years I never made *one reply* to any criticism, good, bad, or indifferent; nor should I have done so now, if I had had *fair play*. But I must *hint*, that the "*doctor's hat*," in my opinion, fits your Lordship better than it does me; for the instant your early poems were sent into the world, and encountered the rude breath of the critics, you *fell foul* of critics, poets, statesmen, lords, ladies, and, among the number, none received less indulgence than your present correspondent. You have admitted with what good-humor this *criticism* on my temper and talents was met, whether it was *more* than I deserved or not.

But your Lordship was "*lazy*;" and therefore the task of bestowing the "*heaviest*" and heartiest lashes, I find devolved on your friend the gallant and puissant KNIGHT OF WESTMINSTER!

Can I, then, pass over entirely this your *coadjutor*, now my

<sup>1</sup> "Hippocrates says, Let us be covered. In what chapter? the CHAPTER of HATS."—Moliere.

lance is in its rest? I do not know whether Hobhouse or your Lordship wrote the lines quoted in the Quarterly. If Hobhouse did not write these, I find he wrote others *more severe*, and therefore I take them as they stand.

"If Pope, whose fame and genius from the first  
Have foil'd the best of critics, need the worst,  
Do thou essay ———

Let all the *dulness* of a former age  
*Perch* on thy pen, and flutter o'er thy page;  
Affect a *candor* which thou can'st not feel,  
Clothe *envy* in the garb of honest zeal;  
Write, as if St. John's soul could still inspire,  
And do from *HATE* what Mallet did for hire."

"If snow-white innocence, that from the first  
Has foil'd the best defenders, need the worst,  
Hobhouse, essay ———

Let all the *pertness* of palav'ring prose  
*Froth* on thy lips, and *perch* upon thy nose;  
Affect a virtue that thou can'st not feel,  
Clothe faction in the garb of patriot zeal;  
Against King, Commons, Lords,—and Canning,—bray,  
And do from *HATE* what Fabre' did for pay!"

The gallant *knight* for Westminster and I are now even. I *should* not have introduced him on the stage, but for your Lordship's specific information; however, though I have thus *glanced* at him with my parting lance, I hope we shall meet at the next Wiltshire dinner for CHARITY, with that entire forgetfulness and *good humor* with which I first met your Lordship, and with which I here drop the pen.

\* Fabre d'Eglantine, one of the most noisy orators of the Palais Royal, (the Palace-yard of Paris,) hired to vilify the Royal Family.

LEST it might be said that I am totally insensible to any thing Poetical, as connected with human ART, I have ventured to add a few lines, written on seeing the *Egyptian Tomb*.

---

### ON THE EGYPTIAN TOMB.

---

Pomp of Egypt's elder day,  
Shade of the mighty pass'd away,  
(Whose giant works still frown sublime  
Mid the dusk of distant Time)  
Fanes, of sculpture vast and rude,  
That strew the sandy solitude,  
Lo! before our startled eyes,  
As at a wizard's wand, ye rise,  
Glimm'ring larger thro' the gloom!  
While on the secrets of the tomb,  
Rapt into other times, we gaze,  
The Mother-Queen of ancient days,  
Her mystic symbol in her hand,  
Great Isis seems herself to stand.

From mazy vaults, high-arch'd and dim,  
Hark! heard ye not Osiris' hymn?  
And saw ye not in order dread  
The long procession of the Dead?



Forms that the night of years conceal'd,  
 As by a flash, are here reveal'd;  
 Chiefs, who sung the victor song,  
 Scepter'd kings, a shadowy throng!  
 From slumber of three thousand years  
 Each as in life and light appears,  
 Stern as of yore! Yes, Vision vast,  
 Three thousand years have silent pass'd,  
 Suns of Empire risen and set,  
 (Whose story Time can ne'er forget,)  
 Since, in the morning of her pride,  
 Immense, along the Nile's green side,  
 The City<sup>1</sup> of the Sun appear'd,  
 And her gigantic image rear'd.

As her own Memnon, like a trembling string,  
 When the Sun, with rising ray  
 Streaked the lonely desert gray,  
 Sent forth its magic murmuring,  
 That just was heard, then died away;  
 So pass'd, oh Thebes! thy morning pride.  
**THY GLORY WAS THE SOUND THAT DIED!**

Dark city of the desolate,  
 Once thou wert rich, and proud, and great.  
 This busy-peopled isle was then,  
 A waste, or roam'd by savage men,  
 Whose gay descendants now appear  
 To gaze upon thy wreck of glory here.

PHANTOM of that city old,  
 Whose mystic spoils we now behold,  
 A kingdom's sepulchre—oh say,  
 Shall Albion's own illustrious day,  
 Thus darkly, close? her power, her fame  
 Thus pass away, a shade, a name!

<sup>1</sup> Thebes.

The Mausoleum murmur'd as I spoke.  
A spectre seem'd to rise, like tow'ring smoke.  
It answer'd not, but pointed as it fled,  
To the black carcase of the sightless dead.<sup>1</sup>

Once more I heard the sounds of earthly strife,  
And the streets ringing to the stir of life.

<sup>1</sup> The mummy.

*May 19th.*

W. L. B.





0

A

# LETTER

TO THE

REV. W. L. BOWLES,

IN REPLY TO HIS LETTER TO

THOMAS CAMPBELL, ESQ.

AND TO HIS TWO LETTERS TO

THE RIGHT HON. LORD BYRON;

CONTAINING

A VINDICATION OF THEIR DEFENCE OF THE POETICAL  
CHARACTER OF

POPE,

AND

AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF POETICAL IMAGES, AND OF THE  
CHARACTERISTIC QUALITIES THAT DISTINGUISH POETRY  
FROM ALL OTHER SPECIES OF WRITING.

---

By M. M'DERMOT.

---

"The vulgar thus through imitation err,  
As oft the learned by being singular;  
So much they scorn the crowd, that if the throng  
By chance go right, they purposely go wrong:  
So schismatics the plain believers quit,  
And are but damna'd for having too much wit."  
POPE.

---

LONDON:

1822.

A

## LETTER

TO THE

REV. WILLIAM L. BOWLES.

---

REVEREND SIR,

IN still continuing to dispute the poetical pre-eminence of Pope, it would seem you are of opinion, that your "invariable principles" have made some impression on the public mind; that it begins to pause in its judgment, to doubt the orthodoxy of the poetical creed, which has continued nearly a century to fix its belief, and to suspect the correctness of that taste which had heretofore determined it to rank Pope, if not the first, at least among the first, of English poets. In forming this judgment, however, I suspect you have listened more to the suggestions of self-adulation, and the ambition of founding a new poetic creed, than to the sober conclusions of reason and philosophy; for I trust, that neither the revolutions of empire, nor the vicissitudes of literature, will ever lead men to believe, that the subject of a poem constitutes more of its poetical excellency, than it derives from the creative genius of the poet himself. Believing, however, that moral as well as physical diseases, are more easily eradicated in their growth, than after they have assimilated with the natural habits and constitution, you will not feel displeased, that I should address you as the author of a theory, which, if once established, would not only vitiate the purity of public taste, but send down to posterity, with diminished lustre, the character of a poet, whose name should be as immortal as his poetic genius was pre-eminent.

If I prove your theory to be erroneous, you will feel indebted to me for undeceiving you, and you will remove from the ranks of those who

“ ————Drily plain, without invention’s aid,  
Write dull receipts how poems may be made.”

Lord Byron, Mr. Campbell, and the writer who reviewed your principles in the Quarterly Review, feel no hesitation in placing Pope by the side of Shakspeare and Milton. In granting him this honorable distinction, they only expressed a feeling which has long since communicated itself to all ranks. The common feeling of mankind is the true standard of taste ; but if the *vox populi* be the *vox Dei* in any species of literature, it is particularly so in poetry, the creations and associations of which, are addressed to the feelings and imagination alone. In judging of the poetical character, it is he only who can feel, that is qualified to decide ; and as Nature, in the distribution of her gifts to man, has more largely endowed him with the susceptibilities of feeling, than with the discriminations of intellect, the generality of mankind are better qualified to judge of an art, whose influence is confined to the heart and its affections, than of theories that address themselves to the understanding alone. All men are not qualified to determine, whether a proposition be true or false ; but all men must know how they feel affected by the sentiments and images of poetry ; and as the merits of a poet entirely consist in exciting the feelings which he intended to excite, every man can tell, whether he feel them himself or not ; and if the generality of mankind agree in their feelings, the pre-eminence of the poet is not only established, but demonstrated.

You, Sir, however, who are a host in yourself, and capable, if not of confuting, at least of disputing with all the admirers of Pope, refuse him the honorable station which has been assigned him by the suffrages of the public, and insist that he must descend from his throne, to rank with an inferior order of poets. You have not favored us with the names of the poets whom you think fit companions for Pope ; but you have sufficiently enabled us to collect from the spirit of your strictures, that he must rank with no *natural* poet. Do not suspect that I use the word *natural*, in the gross and vulgar meaning which Pope would attach to it : I use it in that refined and privileged sense which it conveys in the purer diction of Mr. Bowles. By ranking with no natural poet, I mean to say, that Pope must rank with no poet who talks about nature, who takes his images from nature—whose subject is nature—who affects to admire only what is sublime in nature, and to look down with indifference from the sublime pinnacle of his

own mightiness on all the productions of art, because, forsooth, they are the works of his own hands. Such a poet is entitled to immortality, if your theory be entitled to credit ; and, no doubt, you would become as immortal yourself as Homer or Virgil, had you not come into the world so many ages after them. With regard to future immortality, however, your fame must necessarily be co-existent with theirs ; for as you were acquainted, in all probability, with this golden theory of nature, before you “began to serve your apprenticeship to the Muses,” you must have studiously avoided all terms of art in your poetical works ; and as a poem, according to your inestimable theory, which so admirably dispenses with all the finer associations and creations of genius, derives “its poetical beauty from nature,” and from nature alone, it is obvious, that the “poetical beauty” of your works must far exceed that of Homer or Virgil. Your poems are all nature ; theirs are frequently polluted with terms of art. You have therefore frequently thrust nature in, where they would have thrust her out. As your poetry is then more natural, and more richly decorated with natural images, which, you say, “are more beautiful and sublime than any images drawn from art ; and therefore, *per se*, more poetical,” it follows very clearly, that your pre-eminence as a poet, will far outshine that of Homer or Virgil, and that you must be henceforth looked upon as the prince of poets. It matters little that their genius, invention, execution, and mental energies should be superior to yours ; for your theory packs genius, invention, and execution out of doors at once, when you tell us that “*a description of a forest is more poetical than a description of a cultivated garden, WHATEVER MIGHT BE THE DIFFERENCE OF MERIT IN POINT OF EXECUTION.*” Now, Sir, as your poems are all forests, that is, all images and subjects taken from nature ; and as such subjects and images are more poetical, “whatever might be the difference of merit in point of execution,” it is as clear as demonstration itself, that your works must be more poetical than those of Homer or Virgil, and consequently, that you are a greater poet than either. In saying that all your subjects and images are taken from nature, I merely suppose so from your own theory ; for who would choose any other subjects or images, who was acquainted with the value of them, and the immortality which they are calculated to confer upon the lowest and the most sluggish of the Dunciad tribe ?

It matters little, according to your “invariable principles,” how ignorant a poet may be of nature itself, provided he talk of nothing else,—how ignorant he may be of the soul and spirit of poetry, or of the propriety of the images which he introduces into it, provided they are taken from nature alone, and excite no associations con-

nected with art, or its productions. I am aware that this will appear to some of your readers, not to be ostensibly your theory; for it is so enveloped in sophistry of diction, and confusion of terms, that it is calculated to deceive some, and to confound others in labyrinths of inexplicable and indefinite meaning. I am, however, prepared to prove, that this is virtually your theory; and I am equally prepared to prove, that your theory would make "Thomson's Seasons" infinitely more beautiful and poetical than the "Iliad," or "Paradise Lost."

I regret, indeed, that I should have to take up the subject after Lord Byron, whose reply to you is the reply of a philosopher, a poet, and a writer of refined and classical taste, and which you acknowledge yourself to be "at once argumentative and eloquent." But neither refined taste, nor philosophy, using the term in its enlarged acceptation, I mean that philosophy which looks only to the grander and sublimer operations of nature, without descending to that metaphysical abstraction, that watches and detects the minuter elements of which she is composed, can enable us to silence a writer whose baseless theories are profoundly immersed in what I have already called "labyrinths of inexplicable and indefinite meaning." It seems to have escaped Lord Byron, that the fallacy of your theory lay in your words, and therefore he replied to you as a poet and a philosopher, rather than as a metaphysician. In this, I think his Lordship has erred, for it is only as a metaphysician that he could enter the labyrinths, and explore the secret holds, in which you had secured, or hoped to secure, your doubtful retreat—in a word, that he could prove, either that your propositions conveyed no meaning, or that if they conveyed any, it was a meaning, founded in error, supported by sophistry, and clothed in the light drapery of sensible though unsubstantial reality. Lord Byron probably had not patience to pursue you through all the involutions and oppositions of sense that characterize your "invariable principles," and the variable arguments by which you endeavor to maintain them: probably the sublime conceptions and rapid energies that characterize his writings, would not suffer him to linger over privations of thought, or to seek for gleams of understanding amid wastes of intellect. If, therefore, I succeed in demonstrating the fallacy of your "invariable principles," perhaps I should attribute my success to the want of genius, rather than to the possession of it.

Lord Byron says, that, in poetry, the subject is nothing, the execution is every thing. This position his lordship has satisfactorily proved; though, from not attacking the evil at the root, and proving that neither images, taken from art or nature, are poetical *per se*, he has left you an opportunity of replying to him again;



and you will always reply, till this fallacy on which your whole theory rests, is, to borrow an expression from yourself, "blown away to the winds." While, therefore, I agree with his Lordship in all the arguments which he has advanced against your invariable principles, I differ with him only in granting images or objects to be poetical *per se*; and I doubt not but he will acknowledge the validity of the reasons that have led me to do so. With your principles and illustrations I disagree in *toto*; and if I succeed in proving that there is no object, either in art or nature, "*poetical per se*," your principles necessarily are only the "airy nothings" of your own creation, to which, if I mistake not, you will never be able to give "a local habitation and a name."

Your principles are contained in the following extract from the tenth volume of your edition of Pope's Works:—

"I presume it will readily be granted, that all images drawn from what is beautiful or sublime in the works of nature, are more beautiful and sublime than any images drawn from art, and that they are therefore, *per se*, more poetical."

"In like manner, those passions of the human heart which belong to nature in general, are, *per se*, more adapted to the higher species of poetry, than those which are derived from incidental and transient manners. A description of a forest is more *poetical* than a description of a cultivated garden, and the passions which are pourtrayed in the epistle of an Eloisa, render such a poem more poetical (whatever might be the difference of merit in point of execution), intrinsically more poetical, than a poem founded on the characters, incidents, and modes of artificial life; for instance, the 'Rape of the Lock.'"

"If this be admitted, the rule by which we would estimate Pope's general poetical character would be obvious."

Here we have the sum and substance of your principles. What follows is a mere elucidation of them; and as your propositions are laid down dogmatically, and without any qualification whatever, they must stand or fall by themselves. If they be erroneous, they cannot be explained away by any logical evasions, nor redeemed by that torture of argument to which writers, engaged in a hopeless cause, have so frequently recourse.

Your first principle is, that "images drawn from what is beautiful or sublime in the works of *nature*, are more beautiful and sublime than any images drawn from *art*, and that they are, therefore, *per se*, more poetical." In this proposition you evidently confound the terms beautiful and sublime with poetical; for, to say that an object is poetical in proportion as it is sublime and beautiful, is to say, that sublime, beautiful, and poetical, are synonymous terms—a fallacy the more necessary to be detected, as

it has given the arguments which you have used in your reply to Lord Byron, a degree of plausibility, which vanishes into air, the moment we perceive the sophistry on which it rests. If every thing that is beautiful and sublime be also poetical, it follows, that the Deity is the most poetical of all beings, because he is the most sublime; and yet, if any person spoke to you of a *poetical* deity, I doubt whether you would imagine for a moment, that he alluded to the sublime Creator of heaven and earth. That a sublime object may be a proper subject for poetical description I do not deny, while I maintain that other objects are equally so; but that a sublime object is a poetical one, I believe no person will admit. Beautiful and poetical objects are equally distinct from each other. The fair sex are generally allowed to afford us the best specimens of beauty; but who would think of calling his wife the most poetical woman in England, if she happened to be the most beautiful? I doubt whether she would even be the best subject for poetical description; and though I admit, that the most beautiful of women will always be acknowledged by mankind as the most beautiful of all sensible objects, yet there will still be many objects in nature, infinitely better calculated for poetic description than the mere personal form or beauty of the most beautiful woman. Were I even to confine myself to woman alone, I think few will deny, that her virtues, her sensibilities, and the union of her mental attractions and sympathetic affections, yield more rapture and enthusiasm to the associations of the poet, and are consequently capable of being rendered more poetical, than the most exquisite delineations of mere external form. In saying, therefore, that whatever is beautiful and sublime must be poetical, you have attached a latitude of meaning to the term, which neither the English nor any other language will admit. Those writers who have most profoundly investigated the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful, never imagined they were only writing treatises on the poetical; and yet it is certain, that if every thing sublime and beautiful be poetical, all the works written on these subjects since the time of Longinus, are so many treatises on poetry. You had, no doubt, your own reasons for not explaining to your readers the fixed and definite idea which you attached to the term poetical; and had you even been willing to do so, it is still a question whether you were acquainted with it; or whether you attached any certain idea, or association of ideas, to the term at all. Nothing can be more favorable to the aims of a controversial writer than the latitude of meaning that is attached to some terms; but there is a certain boundary, beyond which no correct, or even sensible writer, will extend the terms which he makes use of. It is, moreover, a duty in every writer, who rests an argu-

meet on any term, to explain in what sense he uses it at the time.

It appears, therefore, either that you attached no fixed meaning to the term poetical, or that you purposely used it in a vague and undefined sense, in order that the ambiguity of your terms might gain credence to the fallacy of your arguments. It will, however, soon appear, if you submit to the conclusions that obviously result from your own arguments and principles, that you have entirely mistaken the true nature of poetry; and that, consequently, the distich which you have so frequently applied to Lord Byron, is more applicable to yourself:

"It grieves me much, the clerk might say again,  
Who writes so well should ever write in vain."

I will readily grant, that there is considerable difficulty in distinguishing poetical, beautiful, and sublime images from each other; or, if it should be easy to determine whether a certain image be beautiful, poetical, or sublime, it would still be found difficult to tell, what universally distinguished all objects and images to which these terms are applicable. But, though all writers have felt, and many eminent writers have endeavoured to remove, this difficulty, you, I believe, are the only writer who have confounded them with each other. You go still farther, and tell us, that whatever is picturesque is also poetical, in which case it must be sublime and beautiful also. In truth, the poetical becomes whatever you choose to make of it; so that no one can be surprised at the little embarrassment with which you seem to defend your theory, who perceives the latitude of meaning, if it may not be called total want of meaning, which you attach to the words on which your arguments principally depend.

But perhaps you will reply, that you do not use the terms poetical, beautiful, sublime, and picturesque, as synonymous; and contend, that though every thing beautiful, sublime, and picturesque, is poetical, it does not follow, that every thing poetical must be sublime. That you will make use of this argument, I am inclined to think from the following notice, prefixed to your Reply to Lord Byron: "It would be important for the reader to keep in mind, one plain distinction in reading what is here offered. Whatever is picturesque is so far poetical; but all that is poetical does not require to be picturesque." By a parity of reasoning you will reply, that whatever is sublime and beautiful is so far poetical; though whatever is poetical does not require to be sublime and beautiful. Now, Sir, if this argument be just, it follows, that the poetical is a genus, of which the sublime, the beautiful, &c.

are species. You cannot consider them as different qualities of it, for if the sublime were a mere quality of the poetical, the sublime itself could not be poetical, inasmuch as nothing can be poetical that wants any of the qualities that essentially constitute its proper nature and distinctive character, in whatever this proper character consists. But as the sublime, in this case, would be only one of the qualities that constitute the poetical, it could not be poetical itself, as it would not contain the other qualities that belong to it, as the beautiful, the picturesque, &c. The lion is distinguished from other animals by his large head, shaggy and pendent mane, strength of limb, formidable countenance, horrible roar, &c. If an animal possessed one of these qualities, such as a large head, he would not be a lion; nor even if he resembled the lion in his nature, instinct, and all the qualities by which he is distinguished, but wanted his large head, or any individual quality that essentially belongs to him, he would not be a lion, though he might belong to the tribe of which he is a species. If then the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque, be different qualities of the poetical, neither of them can be poetical in itself, as neither of them embraces all or any of the other qualities that belong to it; for a mental as well as a material object, is made up, not of one but of the whole aggregate of qualities that suggested its idea to the mind.

It is therefore evident, that if the beautiful, the sublime, and the picturesque, be poetical, they must be so many different species, of which poetical is a genus. Now, if a sublime, a beautiful, and a picturesque object, be each of them a species of the poetical, each of them must possess in itself all the qualities that constitute the poetical; as a man, a horse, and a deer, contain each of them in itself, every quality that enters into our idea of the generic term, animal. It therefore follows, that wherever we meet a sublime object or image in writing, it must be poetical, because it contains its poetical nature in itself. And this you subsequently admit, when you tell us, that objects are poetical in themselves, *per se*, and without any regard to the manner in which they are described. "The sun," you say, "would be poetical if it shone upon none of the emmets of earth, man, or his little works, *per se*, abstractedly." You likewise affirm, that, "the ocean wants not the accessaries of any thing human to make it sublime, and therefore poetical." Wherever the sun or the ocean occurs in description, they must be therefore poetical, because their poetical nature is not contingent, not depending on the nature of the description, nor on any thing human. Now, it is easy to make an experiment, and try whether images sublime in themselves, will be poetical wherever they are met in descrip-

tion. To this mode of putting your theory to the test, you cannot reasonably object, as you have yourself set the example ; and if you even had not, you could not object to it. As you have particularly pitched on the sun and the ocean, as two of the objects that are always poetical, "*per se*, abstractedly, and without the accessaries of any thing human," I have introduced them both into the two following lines, which I hardly think you will call poetical :

The sun had risen before we left town,  
And we got within sight of the ocean about five o'clock.

Now, Sir, if these two lines be not poetical, it is certain, that we may meet with your Sun and Ocean, and all your abstract poetical images, in a thousand narratives and descriptions, that have not a particle of poetry in them : and if not, to what purpose are they called poetical ? Perhaps you will reply, that though these lines are not entirely poetical, yet that that part of them is poetical which is occupied by the sun and ocean. If so, the two following lines must be extremely poetical, judging of poetical lines by the portion of them devoted to poetical words,

The sun, stars, planets, and firmament,  
Give light to the ocean and the earth.

If these two lines be not poetical, I fear your sublime poetical images, those images that are "poetical, without the accessaries of any thing human," are worth but little ; for I cannot understand a person who tells me, that certain terms are poetical in themselves, and yet acknowledges, that two lines are not poetical in which several of them are collected together. You cannot reply, that they would be poetical if they were associated in a poetical manner ; because this would be to admit, that their poetry depended upon the manner in which they were introduced, not on themselves, which is the very theory Lord Byron supports, and to which yours stands directly opposed. If you and I were to write a poem on the same subject, and agreed to introduce only the same images, the public, no doubt, would call yours a beautiful poem, and mine something that

Learn'd to crawl upon poetic feet.

Whence, then, would the difference arise ? Not certainly from the difference of our subjects, or images ; for they would be the same. I doubt, then, whether human ingenuity can point out any cause for your production being poetry and poetical, and mine being prosing, prosaic verse, except the difference of our manner or execution ; and, consequently, the entire of poetry must depend on this manner or execution. That none of it de-

pend upon the subject is manifest from my composition not being in the least degree poetical; which could not possibly be the case, if the subject or images were in the least poetical *per se*, abstractedly, and without the accessaries of any thing human.

If you should take a new ground, and say, that by poetical images, and a poetical subject, you mean images and subjects calculated for poetry, my argument still reduces you to the same dilemma as in the former case; for it proves, that whatever the subject or images may be, or however well calculated for poetry, the description of them will have no poetry whatever, but what it derives from the manner or execution of the poet. Whenever a description, therefore, is poetical, it derives, in all cases whatever, this character from the genius of the poet; which genius you may call manner, execution, treatment, handling, invention, genius, or by whatever other term you please. If the subject were poetical in itself, it would continue to retain this character in the most unpoetical hands. As, then, in all cases where an object or image is poetical in description, it is rendered so entirely by the *manner* in which it is introduced, nothing surely can be more romantic than to attribute its being poetical to any other cause than that by which it is effected.

Again, Sir, if picturesque description be a species of poetry, the following extract from a most picturesque fragment, is poetical in the highest degree:

“ Sir Bertrand turned his steed towards the wolds, hoping to cross these dreary moors before the curfew. Night overtook him. It was one of those nights when the moon gives a faint glimmering of light through the thick black clouds of a lowering sky. Now and then she suddenly emerged in full splendor from her veil, and then instantly retired behind it, having just served to give the forlorn Sir Bertrand a wide extended prospect over the desolate waste. . . . . He had not long continued in that posture when the sullen toll of a distant bell struck his ears. He started up, and, turning towards the sound, discerned a dim, twinkling light—and by a momentary glimpse of moon-light he had full view of a large, antique mansion, with turrets at the corners, and an ample porch in the centre. The injuries of time were strongly marked on every thing about it. The roof in various places was fallen in, the battlements were half demolished, and the windows broken and dismantled. A drawbridge, with a ruinous gateway at each end, led to the court before the building. He entered, and instantly the light, which proceeded from a window in one of the turrets, glided along and vanished. The moon sunk beneath a black cloud, and the night was darker than ever. All was silent.—At the same instant, a deep sullen toll sounded from

the turret. He lifted up the latch of the gate—the heavy door creaking upon its hinges, reluctantly yielded to his hand. . . . . He beheld across a hall, upon a large staircase, a pale bluish flame, which cast a dismal gleam of light around. He advanced towards it—it retired—he followed in silent horror, treading lightly, for the echoes of his footsteps startled him !”

This is exceedingly picturesque, but is it exceedingly poetical, or can it properly be called a fragment of a poem ? If so, we have many poems in the English language which were never recognised as such ;—whose authors never knew themselves to be poets ;—and who have never been acknowledged such by the world.

It is not, however, in the least necessary to prove, that the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque, differ from the poetical, in order to prove the mistaken view of poetry on which your principles are founded, and the fallacy of attributing the “ poetical excellency” of a poem to the subject, and not to the art and powers of the poet. I will then grant, for a moment, that whatever is sublime is also poetical ; and I still maintain, that whatever is poetical in a poem, must depend on the art and powers of the poet.

I must then distinguish two sorts of sublime—the sublime in nature, and the sublime in description. These you have confounded with each other, as you have all your other terms ; and no doubt this confusion of terms has served, in no small degree, to confound yourself, though it may have astonished your admirers. The *naturals* in this country, as well as in France, admire in proportion as they do not understand : they adore idealisms, because, in their opinion, they require neither common sense nor reason ; and as nature is the most inexplicable of all things, they enlist under her banners, and affect to be her disciples, while they are, in reality, her most perverse and obstinate enemies. I distinguish, then, the sublime in nature from the sublime in description, and say, that your arguments can have reference only to the latter, though you generally rest them on the former. The sun and ocean may be as poetical as you please to make them in nature ; but this poetry belongs as little to you, to Pope, or to any other poet whatever, as it does to all mankind. If the sun be poetical, this proves neither you nor him a good or bad poet : the sun has not covenanted to impart any portion of its poetry to either of you ; and therefore if Bavius introduced the sun into a description, it would be as poetical as if it were introduced by Homer, so far as regards the poetry which it possesses in nature. If it carries its poetical nature with it into description, it must do so always, by whomsoever the description is written ; and so far as the abstract poetical nature of the sun is poetical in description, it is

equally so in all descriptions. If, then, the sun be more poetical in one description than another, the difference must arise from the manner in which it is introduced, and therefore the superiority of the one poet over the other arises from his manner, genius, &c. and not from the sun or the introduction of it into his poem. Now, supposing you were to introduce the sun into a poem, and Mr. Campbell to introduce a ship, is it not obvious, that in comparing your respective merits as poets, and in determining which of you should rank highest in the poetical world, we must not look for a moment to the image which either of you have introduced, because if the sun were, *per se*, more poetical than the ship, yet this part of its poetry is no concern of yours? You derive no "poetical pre-eminence" from it; for it would be as poetical in the productions of the veriest scribbler, nay in the language of the idiot who happens to talk of the sun, as it would be in yours. If then you render it more poetical in description than a common scribbler, the difference will arise from your manner, and therefore your merits must be estimated by your manner alone, as it is it alone that has enabled you to render your description more poetical than his. If, accordingly, the mere introduction of the sun confers no "poetical pre-eminence," no eminence of any kind upon you, but what it would confer upon an idiot, and if it be manner alone that determines poetical pre-eminence, it is obvious that, in comparing your poetical merits with those of Mr. Campbell, it is only your mode of handling or treating your subject and images, that is to be taken into consideration. If therefore his manner, style, execution, invention, &c. be happier and more poetic than yours, it will be in vain for you to cry out, "my description is filled with all the sublime poetical images in heaven and earth." The world will look to your manner of introducing these images, and the world, consequently, will determine your poetical merits by your manner alone.

The poet, therefore, can derive no "poetical pre-eminence" for introducing images that are sublime in nature, because their poetry or sublimity do not belong to him, and therefore, if he can claim any "poetical pre-eminence," it must be for images that are sublime in description. But what renders an image sublime in description? If you reflect for a moment, you will perceive, that it is the manner of the describer, and not the original sublimity of the object, whose image is portrayed. The sublimest object in creation will become ridiculous in the hands of an unskilful artist; that is, his description will not be sublime, though the object he describes is sublime in nature. The subject of the following description by Blackmore is exceedingly sublime; but the description itself is ridiculous, and affords so good an example of the "Art



of Sinking," that Dr. Arbuthnot has quoted it in his treatise on that art :

Ætna, and all the burning mountains find  
Their kindled stores with inbred storms of wind  
Blown up to rage, and roaring out complain,  
As torn with inward gripes and torturing pain,  
Laboring they cast their dreadful vomit round,  
And with their melted bowels spread the ground.

You perceive then, Sir, that the sublime in description does not depend upon the sublimity of the object described, but derives its entire sublimity from the manner, or, as you express it, the "execution" of the person who describes. You will no doubt reply, that though a subject sublime in nature, may be rendered ridiculous in description, yet unless it be sublime in nature, the genius of the poet cannot render it sublime in description. I have no doubt but the greater part of the poets, who belong to the *natural school* of poetry, would fail in making it so; believing, as they do, that it would be unnatural to attempt rendering an object sublime in description, which is not so in nature. But I cannot help saying, with Lord Byron, "Away with this cant about nature and invariable principles of poetry. A great artist will make a block of stone as sublime as a mountain; and a good poet will imbue a pack of cards with more poetry than inhabits the forests of America." If, however, you require proofs for this assertion, I feel happy in giving you one from Virgil and another from Homer, for which I acknowledge myself indebted to Mr. Payne Knight. "There are many things," he says, "sublime in description which are not so in reality, as there are objects beautiful in painting, which are not so in nature. No person, I believe, ever felt any sublime emotions on viewing a swarm of bees wrangling in the air; but Virgil's description of it, though strictly true, is sublime in the extreme :—

Ergo, ubi ver nactæ sudum, camposque patentes,  
Erumpunt portis; concurritur; æthere in alto  
Fit sonitus, magnum mixtæ glomerantur in orbem,  
Præcipientesque cadunt. Non densior aëre grando,  
Nec de concussa tantum pluit ilice glandis.  
Ipsi per medias acies, insignibus alis,  
Ingentes animos angusto in pectore versant,  
Usque adeo obnixa non cedere, dum gravis aut hos,  
Aut hos, versa fuga victor dare terga coegit.<sup>1</sup>

"Most of the similes in Homer taken from minute objects are sublime. There are few persons who have not seen crowds of water-fowl fluttering about a moor without feeling any sublime

<sup>1</sup> Georgic iv. 77.

emotions from them : but in the poet's numbers, no imagery was ever more grand, though without one circumstance of exaggeration, or one metaphor of embellishment :—

*Ταν δ', αὖτ' ορνίθων πετειρῶν εἶνεα πολλά,  
Χηρῶν, ἢ γέρανων, ἢ κυκνῶν δουλιχόδεϊραν,  
Ἀσιῶν ἐν λειμῶσι, Καῦστρίου ἀμφὶ ῥέεθρα,  
Ἐθρᾶ καὶ ἐθα ποτῶνται ἀγαλλομέναι πτερυγέσσι,  
Κλαγγῆδον προκαθίζοντων, σμαραγχεὶ δὲ τε λειμῶν.”<sup>1</sup>*

Does it require farther proof, Sir, to demonstrate that the sublime in description depends entirely on the genius of the poet ; that without this genius the most sublime object in nature will become ridiculous in description ; that with this genius, the most indifferent object will become sublime ? If, then, the sublime in description depends entirely on the genius of the poet, and not on the subject, and if he can derive no portion of his poetic excellency from the sublime in nature, as I have already proved, it follows that all sublimity connected with poetical excellency, depends wholly, and without exception, on the genius of the poet ; and, consequently, if you could succeed in proving, that whatever is most sublime is also most poetical, yet as this very sublimity itself must be traced to the genius of the poet alone, as the most sublime object in nature will be ridiculous without this genius, and the most indifferent sublime, when clothed in the magic vesture of its enchantment, it is demonstratively evident, that all “ poetical excellency,” and all “ poetical pre-eminence,” must be ascribed to the genius, or, if you prefer, to the execution of the poet alone.

The passages which I have quoted from Virgil and Homer show how unnecessarily you request of Lord Byron “to remember” that you “speak not of nature generally, but of images sublime or beautiful in nature.” With regard to “images sublime in nature,” I have already proved, that they cannot be a source of “poetical excellency,” that this excellency must be derived from the sublime in description alone. Your anxiety then to impress on Lord Byron's mind, that you “speak not of nature generally, but of images sublime and beautiful in nature,” is perfectly unavailing, as the above passages prove, that “nature generally,” which you think proper to discard from “poetical excellency,” may be rendered sublime and poetical in description, by the creative pencil of genius ; whereas, the most sublime objects in nature will be ridiculous in description, where this genius is absent. And yet you tell his lordship, that if he “had only kept this circumstance

<sup>1</sup> Iliad, B. 459.

in recollection, his 'hog in the high wind, footman's livery,' &c. would go for nothing; for natural as these images might be, they are neither sublime nor beautiful." It is your argument, however, that goes for nothing; for though these objects are neither sublime nor beautiful in nature, they could be rendered so in description; and it is only this latter sublimity that has any relation to poetic excellency, as I have already shown. You perceive then how you have confounded yourself, by confounding the sublime in nature with the sublime in description. Were I to say, that the liberty you take with language is unpardonable, you could hardly think me severe. You almost invariably call objects in nature by the name of images, by which you confound the copy with the original. You say that you "speak not of images sublime or beautiful in nature." I never saw, and I am inclined to think, that you never did see, a sublime or beautiful image in nature. Nature, indeed, presents us with many sublime objects; but she transfers to Art the exclusive right of presenting us with the images of these objects. Who then can enter the fierce arena of controversy with you, when you are thus armed at all points, oblige your opponent to understand all your terms, in whatever sense you please to annex to them, and confound the shadow for the substance, the appearance for the reality, and *vice versa*, as often as you think proper? You tell us that a "hog in a high wind, a footman's livery, Paddington Canal," &c., are natural but not sublime *images*. I doubt whether they are one or the other, because I doubt whether you can point out the prototypes in nature of which they are images.

Having shown, that if you could even succeed in proving the sublime to be always poetical, yet all "poetical excellency and poetical pre-eminence" must, even in this case, result from the "art and powers of the poet," I proceed to show, that the sublime and beautiful are qualities in objects, and consequently in description, perfectly distinct from the poetical, though an object and a description may be sublime and poetical, as a woman may be virtuous and beautiful at the same time. In all cases, however, the sublimity of a description is as easily distinguished from its poetry, as the beauty of a woman from her virtue.

I assert, then, *in limine*, that there is not a poetical object to be found within the whole compass of the works of nature or of art. An object, or image, may be sublime or beautiful, but neither sublimity nor beauty can render an object poetical *per se*. A beautiful object, for instance, whether it be the work of nature or of art, derives its beauty from the whole aggregate and disposition of parts and qualities which it possesses. Make the lips of the Venus de Medicis thinner or thicker, the nose shorter or longer,

the attitude more or less erect, more or less majestic, and you lessen the beauty in a very sensible degree. But to render an object poetical, you must endow it with qualities that do not, or conceal some of those that properly do, belong to it. To describe all the external qualities or appearances of an object belongs to the antiquarian, the historian, the connoisseur, and the mere describer of external nature : to describe its internal structure, component parts, and recondite qualities or properties, belongs to the chemist, the anatomist, and the natural philosopher ; but these descriptions will never be poetical. A sculptor, or experienced connoisseur, would give a more faithful and correct description of the *Venus de Medicis* than a poet would ever think of giving ; and in reading such a description we perceive the object described must be extremely beautiful. But who would ever think of calling such a description poetical ? Yet no description could be more poetical, if we adopt your theory ; for as an object, according to you, must be poetical, in proportion as it is beautiful ; or, what is equivalent, as a more beautiful must be more poetical than a less beautiful object, it follows, that a faithful and accurate description of the *Venus de Medicis* would be more poetical, because its beauty would be more clearly perceived than the most poetical description of a less beautiful object. An accurate description of the *Venus de Medicis* must surely place the beauty of the statue in the fullest light ; and, therefore, according to your theory, it would be the most poetical, because it would best preserve its real, original, poetical nature. Yet experience, and the common consent of mankind, teach us, that such a description, so far from being rendered more poetical by its extreme correctness, and by giving us a perfect idea of this beautiful statue, would have no pretensions to poetry at all, while the description of a toad or a viper might be rendered eminently poetical by the magic associations of genius. This doctrine perfectly accords with Mr. Campbell's idea of poetry. "Delightful," he says, "as nature is to us, yet a literal and fac-simile transcript of her accidental appearances will not constitute poetry." As it is probable, however, that you will object to Mr. Campbell's authority, I give the following description of the Sibyl's Temple at Tivoli, than which, according to Mr. Uvedale Price, "no building is more universally admired for its beauty." The description I give is from the pen of Mr. Knight, and will be found extremely minute and accurate :—

"The ruins of the Temple of Vesta, vulgarly called the Sibyl's Temple, at Tivoli, has been unquestionably admired for its beauty. Compared with the Pantheon, or the Parthenon, it was certainly small ; but compared with any edifice of similar plan (the proper object of comparison) it was by no means so ; for, though smaller

in diameter than that of the same goddess at Rome, it appears to have been, altogether, a larger, more massive, and more considerable building, than either that or any other of the kind known.

"It is all over rough with sculpture, and built of the most rugged, porous, unequal stone ever employed in a highly wrought edifice."

"The parts, instead of having any variety, or even difference in their direction, all converge to one central point, as they necessarily must in a building completely circular. Even the columns have a horizontal inclination inwards equal to their perpendicular diminution upwards, which shows a most scrupulous attention to exclude every appearance of such variety.

"Every thing is composed of angles: the entablature consists of angles projecting beyond each other; the soffits, of angles indented within each other; the capitals are clusters of angles, obtuse in the abacus, and acute in the foliage, while the columns being fluted exhibit circles of angles round every shaft, and stand upon a basement surrounded by a cornice composed chiefly of angular mouldings."

I feel it is unnecessary to pursue this description farther, because I know you will not hesitate to acknowledge that it has nothing of poetry in it, beautiful as the object is which it describes, and accurate as the picture is which it presents of it. Now, Sir, if a more beautiful be a more poetical than a less beautiful object, whence does it happen that this description of a beautiful object is not poetical? You will not surely contend that it arises from the inaccuracy of the description, and from its not faithfully delineating the beauty of the original. Does it arise, then, from its not being restricted to measure, numbers, quantity, and rhyme? If so, measure, numbers, quantity, and rhyme, are essential to poetry, and consequently, an object or image may be beautiful without being poetical, because it may be beautiful without measure, number, quantity, or rhyme. I believe, however, you will not hesitate to acknowledge, that if this prose description of Mr. Knight were turned into rhyme, it would still be prosaic, though the accuracy and correctness of the expression should be faithfully preserved. It is obvious, then, that the mere beauty of the object described, is not sufficient to render either itself, or the description of it, poetical, not even when this description is subjected to the poetic restrictions of measure, number, quantity, and rhyme. The object may be beautiful, the description a *fac-simile* of the original, the numbers, measure, quantity, and rhyme, regulated by the strictest laws of poetic harmony and versification, and yet there may be no poetry in the description. There must, then, be something beyond mere beauty, number, measure, quantity, and

rhyme, to render a description poetical. Of this something, Sir, you appear to be ignorant, and while you are so, you cannot tell in what poetry consists; and if not, you must come forward with a very ill grace to instruct the world in its invariable principles. Horace advises us to choose a subject *æquam viribus*; and to consider maturely

————— quid ferre recusent,  
Quid valeant humeri.

I fear, Sir, you forgot this precept of Horace when Mr. Campbell, as you say, forced you into this "idle controversy, by totally misrepresenting your statements;" for as these principles are utterly indefensible, the only evil that could result from Mr. Campbell's mistake was the substitution of one error for another. If he even understood you aright, your principles would still be erroneous: if he mistook you, he could only attribute one error to you instead of another. But to return to the "Sibyl's Temple," perhaps you will reply, that this description of it is not poetical, because the subject it describes is a work of art. The fallacy of this reply will be rendered obvious, by the following description of Melrose Abbey, by Walter Scott. It is a description which, I have no doubt, you will acknowledge to be poetical; and yet the subject is a work of art, and much less beautiful than the far-famed temple of the Sibyl:

If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,  
Go visit it by the pale moon-light;  
For the gay beams of lightsome day  
Gild but to flout the ruins gray.  
When the broken arches are black in night,  
And each shafted Oriel glimmers white;  
When the cold light's uncertain shower,  
Streams on the ruin'd central tower,  
When buttress and buttress alternately,  
Seem framed of ebon and ivory,  
When silver edges the imagery,  
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;  
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,  
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave;  
Then go—but go alone the while,  
Then view St. David's ruined pile;  
And, home returning, soothly swear,  
Was never scene so sad and fair.

Is it not obvious, from this description of Melrose Abbey, compared with that of the Sibyl's temple, by Mr. Knight, that what renders a description poetical, must be something different from the real qualities of the object described; as it belongs to the poet to find this something out, as it is the manner in which he describes, that renders his description poetical, it follows, contrary to

your invariable principles, that a more beautiful is not more poetical, than a less beautiful object, as neither one nor the other is poetical in the least degree, abstracted from the manner in which it is handled by the poet. A beautiful object is not therefore "poetical *per se*."

But you will reply, that the images of beautiful and sublime objects will be more poetical than images drawn from any other objects, though their prototypes in nature are not poetical in themselves. If so, I would simply ask, why beauty or sublimity should render an image poetical, when it does not render the object of which it is an image, poetical in the least? Can you answer this question? I apprehend not, for the following very obvious reason:—A poetical image, or any image presented to us through the medium of writing, whether poetry or prose, is only the image or idea, which the writer's description conveys to us of the object described; but as it is not the description which conveys the most correct likeness of the original, that is found to be the most poetical; in fact, as such a description would not be poetical at all; it follows, that poetical images are not the real images of the objects described, whether they be sublime or otherwise. The sublimity of the object, therefore, cannot render its image poetical, because a faithful representation of a sublime or any other object will not be poetical in the least. The very attempt to describe a sublime object as it exists in nature, destroys every thing like poetry in the description, nor would such a correct delineation only render the description unpoetical, but even destroy the sublime effect. At the same time, it must be recollected, that no image can properly be called an image of a certain object, if it be not a correct one, that is, if it presents the object to us more or less beautiful, more or less sublime than it exists in nature.

Your theory, Sir, would confine poetry to sublime, beautiful, and picturesque descriptions; but poetry will not be restricted to such limits. The poet, indeed, frequently delights in exciting the emotions of the sublime and beautiful: the picturesque, if understood in its most extended acceptation, does not entirely fall within his province. Of the picturesque, however, I must not say more at present, as the subject would carry me far beyond the limits of an epistle; but I would not pass it over so briefly, were it not that I have been for some time past engaged in preparing for the press a work on the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque, in which I shall have an opportunity of explaining myself fully on the subject of picturesque description, and of its alliance with poetry. It matters, however, but little, so far as regards your theory, whether the picturesque be, or be not,

solely and exclusively the inheritance of the poet alone ; because it requires little philosophy or experience to perceive, that poetry, so far from confining itself to descriptions that excite only emotions of sublimity, beauty, and picturesqueness, extends its empire over all the affections, passions, sensations, emotions, sympathies, and sensibilities of man. It is peculiarly the province of the poet to probe the inmost recesses of the heart ; to watch all its secret movements and vibrations, and the still more secret and less perceptible causes from which they originate ; to trace the varying aspect which different passions assume in different characters, under the diversified influences of times and situations ; and from the knowledge which he acquires through this commerce with the heart, to create such images of material being, and to connect and associate them in description by such moral and intellectual relations, as are best qualified to call into action the immediate passions, emotions, or sympathies which he intends to excite.

This, Sir, is my view of Poetry, and in taking this view of it, I am led to conclude, that *in Poetry there is no quality, property, or attribute of a subject supposed to be feigned*. I am aware that Bacon and many writers, have supposed fiction to be the soul of poetry ; and even those who consider fiction not absolutely essential to it, are willing to grant, that it is one of its chief and distinguishing characteristics. It is the business of the poet, as I have already observed, to place such images before us as awaken the immediate emotions which he loves to excite. If he aims to excite a grand and sublime idea, he selects from the object which he describes only such qualities as associate with our ideas of grandeur and sublimity, and carefully conceals all the other qualities that belong to the object. He must not, however, attribute qualities to the object described which the mind has no difficulty in perceiving cannot belong to it ; for the mind immediately revolts at imposition, and the detection of the fraud destroys the sublime effect. Hence it is that we cannot endure at present poetic images drawn from the slightest mixture of Christian and Pagan mythology, though we are enraptured with Pagan images in the works of Pagan writers, because we place ourselves in their situations, and feel as they had felt. We know, it is true, that their images and relations are all fictitious, but we know at the same time that they themselves sincerely believed in them, and such is the force of sympathy, that we have no feeling of our own at the moment but what we imagine was felt by our honest but credulous ancestors. In poetry then the mind will endure no qualities to be ascribed to things, no images depicted of them, and no circumstance related of them, which has the slightest appearance of being feign-



ed. It is true the poet is continually feigning, continually attributing qualities, properties, and affections to objects, which they do not possess; but then he industriously conceals this fiction from the mind, and he is careful to ascribe no quality to an object but what it possesses, or what the mind has no difficulty in attributing to it. It is in this his art chiefly lies; for if he attributes a quality to an object which the mind perceives at a glance cannot belong to it, the charm is destroyed, the poetry is destroyed, and we turn from it with disgust. This is the true source of the false sublime in poetry. The poet whose judgment does not keep pace with his imagination, imagines qualities in objects which men of ordinary perceptions and common sense would never suppose them capable of possessing. Accordingly, in describing these objects, clothed in these ennobling qualities, he presents us with a picture, which he expects will fill us with grand and sublime emotions, but which we instantly turn from with aversion; and such pictures we denominate by the name of bombast, or the false sublime. In poetry, then, the mind will endure no images of things that have the appearance of being feigned, though the poet may introduce the most palpable fictions, if he has art enough to introduce them so ingeniously as not to carry the evidence of their fictitious character along with them. This, if I be not mistaken, is the true nature of poetry; and while the poet keeps it in view, he will always know how far he may deviate from strict and literal truth. All writers acknowledge, that even in the most feigned part of poetry, we must not deviate too far from truth; but the exact limits to which the wanderings of the poet ought to be circumscribed, have not been precisely determined. It is true that fictions in poetry will not endure philosophic investigation, for a little consideration will enable us to perceive, that the poet has imposed upon us; but we are satisfied with the imposition, provided it be not detected intuitively and without any exercise of the understanding. The poet, however, though he is not permitted to ascribe qualities, &c. to objects, which the mind cannot suppose them capable of possessing, may feign an object that has no existence in nature; but the moment he gives us a general idea of its nature and character, he is no longer permitted to ascribe qualities to it which do not obviously agree with this nature and character; so that in all cases whatever, the mind will endure no qualities, attributes, properties, affections, or circumstances, to be attributed to objects, which it intuitively perceives cannot belong to them. It matters, however, but little, that philosophy, or even a slight exercise of common sense, should afterwards discover the illusion; for we may know from the commencement, that the poet is imposing upon us; but, notwith-

standing this knowledge, we are offended with him the moment he suffers us to detect the imposition. The truth is, that there is more pleasure derived from the appearances, than from the realities of things, and, therefore, truth is seldom so agreeable as fiction. But though we wish to grasp at pleasure, in whatever shape it presents itself, we always love to conceal this wish from ourselves; and we cannot endure the poet who, while he professes to please us, discovers every moment, by his want of art, that all the pleasure he imparts is founded in delusion. I am aware that Mr. Campbell says, "fiction in poetry is open and avowed;" and so it is, in that qualified sense which I have here explained; nor do I think it can be inferred from the spirit of his "Lectures on Poetry," that he used the terms "open and avowed" in an unlimited and unrestricted meaning.

I have made these observations on the nature of poetry and poetic images, to show that they are very distant from mere beauty, sublimity, and picturesqueness; and that, if it be sense to say, "every thing sublime is poetical," it is equally sense to say, every thing ridiculous is poetical; for it belongs to poetry and to the poet to excite the emotion or sense of ridicule, as well as the emotion or sense of sublimity. In a word, poetry, as I have already observed, extends its influence over all the affections, passions, sensations, emotions, sympathies, and sensibilities of man. If the poet wishes to excite a sublime emotion, he selects from the object which he describes such qualities only as associate with our ideas of sublimity; or if the object should be destitute of these qualities, he confers them on it, or at least such of them as the mind may suppose capable of belonging to it. If he wishes to excite the sense of ridicule, he selects, as before, the most ridiculous circumstances that can be attributed to the object, and renders his description highly poetical, though the object he describes is highly ridiculous. Yet it would be as proper to say, that whatever is ridiculous is consequently poetical, because poetry is so well calculated to excite an emotion of ridicule, as to say, that whatever is sublime or beautiful, is consequently poetical, because poetry is so well qualified to excite the emotions of the sublime and beautiful. But I would ask, Sir, what emotion, affection, or passion, that ever agitated the breast of man, is not as much under the dominion of poetry, as the emotions of sublimity, beauty, and ridicule? There is no passion natural to the breast of man, to which there are not corresponding qualities in natural objects; and the moment these objects are presented to us, clothed in these qualities, the corresponding passion is immediately summoned into action. If the poet wishes to excite the sense of *fear*, he exclaims, with Collins:—

" Ah! Fear, ah! frantic Fear!  
 I see, I see thee near.  
 I know thy hurried step, thy haggard eye,  
 Like thee, I start, like thee, disorder'd fly;  
 For lo! what monsters in thy train appear.  
 Danger, whose limbs of giant mould  
 What mortal eye can fix'd behold?  
 Who stalks his round, a hideous form,  
 Howling amidst the midnight storm;  
 Or throws him on the rigid steep  
 Of some loose hanging rock to sleep:  
 And with him thousand phantoms join'd,  
 That prompt to deeds accurs'd the mind;  
 And those the fiends, who, near allied,  
 O'er Nature's wounds and wrecks preside;  
 While Vengeance, in the lurid air,  
 Lifts her red arm, exposed and bare,  
 On whom that ravening brood of fate,  
 Who lap the blood of sorrow, wait.  
 Who, Fear, this ghastly train can see,  
 And look not madly wild like thee?"

How excellently does the poet select in this ode such images as best associate with our ideas of fear, and who would refuse to acknowledge that this picture of fear is highly poetical? Yet fearful and poetical were never considered as synonymous terms, though they are just as nearly allied to each other as beautiful and poetical. Proceed then, Sir, through the whole catalogue of the passions; bring forward hope, joy, pity, grief, jealousy, envy, indignation, anger, hatred, love, &c., and you will find them all as nearly allied to poetry as either beauty or sublimity; for the tie by which they are all connected to poetry is the same. And it does not require a moment's consideration to perceive that a greater part of the passions are connected with, and elicited by, the works of art, that is by the productions and creations of our own hands, because our interests are more immediately connected with them, than by the sublimer works of nature. If you merely wanted to prove, that the works of nature were more sublime and beautiful than the works of art, few, I believe, would dispute the question; but to say that they are more poetical, and consequently more characteristic of poetical pre-eminence, is, I trust, sufficiently proved, to discourage you from resuming the defence of it in future.

When Gray describes the Eagle,

Sailing with supreme dominion  
 Through the azure deeps of air,

he gives a description eminently poetical. But is it the Eagle itself that is poetical? certainly not; for if it were, it would be poetical to say, "the Eagle, however hungry, never feeds on pu-

trid bodies." If the name of the Eagle be poetical, it must be so wherever it occurs. Neither can we call the image which the poet conveys of the Eagle poetical; for he who never saw or heard of an eagle before he read this description, could form no image of him whatever, except that he would know him to be a bird, from his flying through the air. If I say, "the Eagle is about forty inches in length; the bill is blue, and the eye yellow; the legs are of a dirty yellow color, and feathered on the toes, the plumage is a mixed brown and rust color; the tail is clouded with ash color at the base," I enable a person who never saw or heard of an Eagle, to form an image of him in his own mind; but this image is not in the least degree poetical, though it is extremely correct. If then Gray has rendered the Eagle

Sailing with supreme dominion  
Through the azure deeps of air

poetical, it is not because he has drawn his image from nature; for if he said, "the Eagle is a bird of prey," the image would be as much from nature as in the former case. The poetry of these two lines must not therefore be traced to a mere abstract, or *per se* image from nature; for such an image was never poetical; but must be sought for alone in the associations which they convey to the mind. The language of poetry is the language of pleasing associations, and the images introduced into it, whether taken from nature or from art, never please by themselves; or, as you express it, *per se*, but derive all their poetry, and the pleasures which they impart, from the relation which the poet creates between them, or, in other words, from the manner in which he connects and associates them with each other. These associations, so far from being suggested to the mind by the images considered apart, are not even suggested by the mere act of bringing them together; for if you were to select a thousand of what you would deem the most poetical images in nature, these thousand could be so introduced into verse, that you would instantly acknowledge they had not the remotest claim to the character of poetry, though the images should be so introduced, that nothing absurd or inconsistent could be pointed out in the thought or expression. This, however, could not possibly be effected if the images, as you assume, were poetical in themselves. On the other hand, if the same number of the most unpoetical images which you could draw from the works of art, were brought into verse by a poet of refined taste and genius, he would render them more poetical, or, at least, he would produce a finer poem from these unpoetical materials, than a writer who had no genius for poetry could fabricate out of the most poetical images in nature. I doubt whether

Locke or Newton could produce a poem, that is, a poem that could be called poetry, in the strict sense of the expression, out of the most poetical images or materials with which the whole range of nature could supply them. In poetry, therefore, the subject is nothing—the materials are nothing—the images are nothing: all depends on the *execution*; all depends on the *manner* in which the artist brings his images together, and not on the images themselves.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]





This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

~~APR 7 1958~~

3024

3387473

~~DUE JAN 18 49~~

APR 10 1958

~~JUL 29 1959 H~~

4255707

DUE SEP 74 H

~~JUL 6 1960 H~~

Cancelled  
5-55-7/19



15451.359

A letter to the Right Hon. Lord Byr

Widener Library

004971669



3 2044 086 764 685